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# STALIN ENDS A CHAPTER

STALIN has publicly recognised that the Comintern is a hindrance and has abolished it. This is no propaganda trick, but the completion of a cycle of policy. The document issued from Moscow instructs Communists in each country (this accords well with one of Lenin's precepts), that, instead of blindly obeying instructions from Moscow, they should themselves work out the policy and tactics most suited to their own conditions.

When the Comintern was founded after the last war, it was to be the instrument of a world revolution, which then seemed to many as close at hand as the Second Coming seemed to the Early Christians. The outlook and tactics of the Third International have always been conditioned by this origin; they belong to a country where progress was impossible without violent revolution, where free speech and the right of association were denied; where, indeed, no tradition of liberalism had ever taken root.

The most spectacular Comintern failures were in China and in Germany; in Germany, especially, wiser guidance and a policy founded on an understanding of national conditions would have made it impossible for Communists to devote their energies to attacking Social Democracy and in some cases even to supporting the Nazis. After Hitler's triumph, however, Communists were again seen to advantage. As underground workers, brave and devoted, they are just as valuable as they may be disastrous in a democracy where the entire political tradition demands a different policy.

The victory of Stalin over Trotsky, the economic achievements of the Five-Year Plans, Moscow's decision to take part in the bourgeois councils at Geneva—all these mark stages in the decline of the Comintern. In Spain it had had a chance to function powerfully in support of the Popular Front, but since then it has become no more than a reserve weapon in Stalin's hands; it represents the alternative policy to be used by Moscow if the Western Democracies worked with Fascist States against the U.S.S.R. Of all possible actions, to abolish the Comintern is Stalin's clearest indication to Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill and General Chiang Kai-shek, that he intends to act as head of the Soviet Union and not as the promoter of revolutions abroad. This does not involve any change in the theory that world Socialism must follow the breakdown of international capitalism; it is an announcement that in the post-war period Stalin believes that the interests of world Socialism are best served by strengthening the U.S.S.R.

The results of such a clear indication of Soviet policy must be far reaching. As a counter to Goebbels nothing could be more appropriate. The entire Axis is built on the Anti-Comintern Pact. Common adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact is the only basis of alliance between Germany and her satellites, Hungary, Rumania, Italy and Franco Spain. Further, Mr. Roosevelt's path in collaborating with the Soviet Union is immensely eased by the removal of the very strongest weapon in the hands of his Catholic and "anti-Red" Republican enemies.

Stalin's decision was no doubt made before the welcome arrival of Mr. Davies in Moscow. It should make more fruitful a meeting of Stalin with the President and the Premier. If they do meet it is to be hoped they reach agreement about matters beyond the immediate strategy of the war and even beyond Russia's immediate and post-war need of food and other aid. On a former occasion Mr. Churchill and Stalin agreed that they were fighting Hitlerite Germany, and Stalin, it is to be remembered, is an adherent of the Atlantic Charter. The vague generalisations of that declaration need now to be filled up into a conception which would give people a forward view in every country, an assurance (still lamentably lacking) that the peace will constitute a step towards a saner organisation of the world. Stalin may reasonably ask that Britain and America show their good faith by ceasing to flirt with pro-Fascist Poles, with General Mihailovitch, with Hapsburgs and other survivals of a past that should be dead. If Stalin abolishes the Communist International, should not Britain and the United States liquidate all the remaining hangers-on of the Fascist International?

Is it too much to ask when those Great Chiefs meet that they will find time to consider not only strategy and "national interests," but also the needs of ordinary people who are increasingly realising that they cannot get freedom from want without Socialist planning, or freedom from fear of war without a world authority? The two great challenges presented to our generation have been, first, to transfer into public hands the common means of life now absurdly the "property" of a few, and, secondly, to substitute for the warring rivalry of sovereign states the authority, preferably Federal, of an international organisation. Russia, twenty-five years ago took the first steps towards this ultimately inescapable reorganisation of the world. Whether the next steps are taken by our present leaders, or after a further period of agony and bloodshed does not only depend on their capacity to find a solvent for problems of conflicting "national" interests. That is important. But more important in the long run is the necessity of satisfying the needs of ordinary men and women who in Britain, Russia, America, in Asia and all over the tortured Continent of Europe really want the same simple things—security, work, enough to eat and drink, the chance to think and speak freely, to laugh and to enjoy themselves in freedom.

### The Allies and Italy

In his talk to pressmen at the White House on Tuesday, Mr. Churchill went further than either he or the President had yet done in indicating how Italy might find a way of escape from the war. He could hardly be said to have modified materially the Casablanca demand for "unconditional surrender": Italians must "throw themselves on the justice of those they had attacked." He did, however, give Italy certain negative assurances: in the event of a change of heart leading Italy to sue unconditionally for peace, "the native soil"—a term capable of various interpretations—would not be taken from Italy, nor would Italians be denied their life in the new Europe. So far so good. But to what audience in Italy is the Prime Minister addressing himself? And from what party or organisation in Italy are to come the emissaries with whom we are by implication prepared to sign an armistice on terms dictated by us "without inhumanity"? The Prime Minister spoke, as he is apt to do, of "the Italian people"; but that is a term which has racial or geographical, not political, meaning. After twenty years of totalitarian government the old political parties in Italy are in effect obliterated. Socialism and the Liberal Catholic traditions of the Popular Party survive at best as political philosophies. They are not represented by organised movements capable of assuming power. Apart from the Papal hierarchy, which could not be an organ of civil administration, the only organisation in Italy which could supplant the present regime, and with which *as a strictly interim* alternative Government we might treat, is the Army. But if Mr. Churchill really hopes that the Army under the leadership of the King or the Crown Prince will overthrow Fascism and sue for peace before the "physical stimuli" (threatened in the next breath by the Prime Minister) have laid the cities of Italy in ruins, the Allies' intentions towards Italy must be stated with greater precision—in the economic as well as the political field. If the potential liquidators of the existing "outlawed" Fascist regime are to be persuaded to cut adrift from the Axis, they must have an assurance that the Allies will not merely be humane, but will guarantee to Italy during the remaining, possibly lengthy, phases of the European war the foodstuffs and, above all, the raw materials which she now gets from Germany and without which she would be faced with famine and anarchy.

### French Unity

General Catroux is to be congratulated on the diplomacy which has at last, after five months of negotiation, reached an arrangement between Generals de Gaulle and Giraud. The substance of it is that until the soil of the Republic is liberated and an election can be held, the sovereignty and day-to-day authority over all that is French and free will be vested in an executive committee of nine over which the two generals will preside alternately. From this committee the reactionary officials who have hitherto governed North Africa, notably General Noguès and M. Peyrouton, are presumably to be eliminated. Six members are chosen already, of whom M. André Philip and M. Massigli (once of the Quai d'Orsay) represent the Fighting French, while that brilliant civil servant M. Monnet, is reported to be one of General Giraud's nominees. The other three members, among whom will doubtless be General Catroux, will be appointed when the first fateful meeting takes place, which is after all to be at Algiers. This executive is to observe the principle of collective responsibility like a Cabinet and take its decisions by majority vote. It will organise a bigger consultative council and appoint commissioners to fill the various executive posts under it. It includes some men of great distinction and experience. The arrangement by which the two generals preside alternately may be a weakness, and ought there not to be more than one man (André Philip) among the nine to speak for the underground movement of resistance? But all in all, the omens are good and very much better than the record of recent months has led us to expect.

### Bermuda's Harvest

The account which the Government gave the House last week of the decisions reached in the Hush-hush Conference at Bermuda was as exasperatingly vague as it was meagre. All the bigger proposals for the rescue of the Jews from massacre were dismissed at sight. No attempt will be made through the neutral Powers to see whether the Red Cross could be used to get some of the victims, children at least, if not adults, out of the slaughter-house that is Poland. Nor is any Minister being appointed, with the job, as it was Nansen's after the last war, to care for refugees and prisoners: this remains an interdepartmental matter. Again, for whatever reason, in fact next to no use is being made of Palestine as an asylum, though 30,000 immigrants' places are vacant. But in two matters there is progress to report. The refugees (both racial and political) who were in Spain and Portugal are being transferred to North Africa and other regions where at least they will be in less danger. Does this include any assurance to Switzerland and Sweden that if they open their doors to capacity (as indeed, with great generosity they are doing) they will be relieved, after the war, of part at least of the burden they have assumed? Finally, our own doors, which the Home Office had kept pretty rigidly closed since the outbreak of war, now show some quite perceptible chinks. Thus parents who have a son serving in our forces or with an allied army will now at long last stand a chance of receiving a visa. This is a considerable advance. Hitherto we have admitted only foreigners who could help us in our war effort, on the ground of utility alone—sturdy Norwegian sailors, for example. At last, after four years, we have decided to admit a very few on ground of mercy and humanity—but only if they can show that they brought some cannon-fodder into the world for our use.

### Hot Springs

Vague in its terms of reference and unwieldy in its composition, the nutrition conference could not begin well. The Americans, who as hosts and as the main source from which food supplies will come now or later, are in a commanding position. They want to discuss nutrition in terms of food-standards and their relation to long-term planning. President Roosevelt has, as usual, to face a barrage of Republican shooting; the United States are "to be pledged to feed the world indefinitely for no return." Propaganda about the European bread-line cannot be altogether disregarded, in view of the restive Farm Block. Americans have therefore been at pains to state that Hot Springs has no concern with relief or immediate reconstruction, while the British delegation have tried to get close to practical policy by proposing the creation of a food-pool created in time of surplus to steady supply in time of shortage, a "buffer stock," and an authority representing both producers and consumers to regulate trade in foodstuffs. Mr. Krutikov, the Russian spokesman, was more challenging. He urged that the present as well as the post-war needs of the Soviet Union had to be faced. The loss of the Ukraine and other agricultural areas has meant acute shortage, and liberated areas must be fed. This vast problem in fact falls into three divisions, which are distinct but inter-related. The first is the actual science of nutrition—to lay down the standard of feeding necessary to keep human beings in health. Its principles are already known; the conclusions of the League of Nations on this subject, internationally discussed and accepted years ago, only require some detailed additions to bring them up to date. The Americans tend to disregard these foundations. The second aspect is the application of the science of nutrition; this involves recognition of adequate feeding as the basis of planning on which agricultural and economic policy must be built. Meanwhile, staring all of us in the face is the ghastly and urgent problem of feeding starving people in Europe and Asia.

### Tories Confer

The Conservative Party Conference—the first since 1937—was evidently making some attempt to bring its social policy into line with modern necessities. It welcomed and endorsed the Beveridge Report, albeit not without some dissentient voices, and applauded the speaker who described Sir William Beveridge as an "unconscious Tory," and professed to see an anti-Socialist temper in the widespread public welcome given to his Report. This, of course, is quite in line with the Disraelian policy of stealing the Radicals' clothes while they are bathing. There was something of the same spirit in the educational resolutions which, acclaiming public school education as the best yet devised, went on to claim that its benefits must not be restricted to the children of wealthier parents and to declare that a mere extension of scholarship facilities to public schools and universities would not be enough to meet the need. The Conference also passed a strongly worded resolution in favour of "private enterprise" in industry, and, in declaring for Indian "freedom," restricted its advocacy to "free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth of Nations under an *agreed* constitution of Indian devising." In the electoral field, it called for younger candidates, including Tory working men. Finally, it adopted, against some opposition, a resolution calling for a clear and unequivocal declaration of Conservative post-war policy to be presented to the country at once as a basis on which every constituency in the country could be fought. So what?

### Bancor and Unitas

The public debate about *bancor* and *unitas* continues. The more one hears of the American plan, with *unitas* as the basis of its currency arrangements, the clearer it becomes that acceptance of it would put the nations back into the strait-jacket of gold and would in effect give the United States a veto over the financial policies of all other nations. As against this Lord Keynes, in his maiden speech in the House of Lords, made out a strong case for his *bancor* plan as giving a good foundation of elasticity and avoiding the danger that any international scheme runs of enforcing deflation on the financially weaker parties. Lord Keynes, like other British spokesmen, was very careful not to pit his plan against the American plan in such a way as to involve either with questions of national prestige. It remains fortunately true that neither the British nor the American Government is in any way committed—fortunately, because it would be disastrous to have rival schemes officially endorsed, and because the case is clearly one for much more international discussion before any scheme is officially approved. The first condition of any scheme is that it should be designed to maintain production at the level of "full employment." The second condition is that the scheme must be so designed as to check tendencies to runaway inflation; but it is vitally important to put this condition second and not first.

### Pensions and Politics (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The Labour Party is always stirred more easily by "bread-and-butter" problems than by questions of socialisation. The large Labour vote against the Government on the latest Pensions Bill was in part the result of a desire to raise the basic rate for old age pensioners and to improve the position of childless widows, but it was also in part an aftermath of the Beveridge debate. I believe that the strength of feeling shown in that debate had excellent results and that, largely thanks to Morrison's pressure in the Cabinet, departments are actively working on the measures necessary to carry out the proposals accepted by the Government. The introduction of the present patch-work measure on Pensions, however, suggests that it may be a long time before the Government implements the Pensions part of their full Social Security Plan; many Labour Members sympathised with George Dagger when he said: "Heaven save us from Beveridge and his plan because before it was published it was used by the Government as an excuse for inactivity, and since its publication it has been used as a defence for doing the right thing in the wrong way." The 63 M.P.s, including Whips, who went into the lobby against the Government (50 being Labour) would have preferred the withdrawal of the Government Bill and a speeding up of the introduction of their fuller proposals. The small vote for the Government (234, including

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Whips; 65 of them only being Labour) showed the lack of enthusiasm for the Bill. It is significant that the Tory Reform group led by Hogg and Hinchinbroke have not yet carried their criticism of the Government into the division lobby. Not a single Tory voted against the Administration either in the Beveridge debate or on this Pensions Bill.

The battle over Civil Aviation develops and there is pressure from many quarters—including, of course, the vested interests who want to enter this field after the war—for a full dress debate on the subject. Sinclair had a rough passage when announcing new members of the British Overseas Airways Corporation. On all sides of the House there were queries about the identity of Lord Knollys, the new Chairman, whilst it was openly, if somewhat querulously, asked whether Air Commodore Critchley's association with dog racing was a qualification for his appointment as Director General. Those who want the B.O.A.C. run efficiently are far from satisfied that the Government take it seriously.

## "UNITY" IN BRITAIN

The dissolution of the Communist International, announced from Moscow last week-end, is an event of world importance. Historians, looking back upon it, will have to consider it mainly in terms of its effects on the relations of the Soviet Union with the rest of the world—notably, with the United States—and on the future of the Socialist movement in Europe. Its bearing on the internal politics of the British Labour movement will probably appear, in retrospect, comparatively unimportant. Yet it is inevitable that we in Great Britain, on account of the moment which has been chosen for announcing it, should be very much concerned with its influence on our own affairs. Coming as it does at a moment when the Labour Party Conference is about to consider a renewed application for admission from the Communist Party of Great Britain, it is most obviously notable as cutting the ground away from under the feet of the Labour Party Executive by removing the argument on which that body has principally relied in opposing the British Communists' demands. The Labour Executive has urged, quite rightly, that the explicit rules and regulations of the Communist International, which makes the national Communist Parties mere sections of itself and bind them absolutely to follow an international "party line" determined in Moscow, render it impossible for the British Communist Party to accept the obligations involved in affiliation to the Labour Party and therefore make that body ineligible for such attachment, whatever protestations of loyalty its leaders may make. This argument has been unanswerable; and the British Communist Party, in all its attempts to argue, has merely skated round it.

Now, at a blow, the entire force of that contention has been destroyed. It is as if the Catholic Church had abolished not merely the doctrine of papal infallibility, but the Holy See itself. There is no longer any organisation outside Great Britain to which the British Communist can be held to owe allegiance: there is no longer, at any rate in form, any bar to its accepting the full obligations of Labour Party affiliation. The conditions laid down in the Mineworkers' resolution favouring affiliation have been satisfied: the entire situation confronting the Labour Party delegates has been radically altered.

This constitutional change, however, does not end the controversy. No one supposes that the abolition of the Third International will of itself make members of the Communist Party less inclined to disregard all other interests than those of the Soviet Union. No one supposes that the British Communists have changed their views or their scale of values merely because they have been freed formally from an international obligation which they were pledged to put first. Many of the opponents of Communist affiliation therefore continue to argue that nothing is really changed, that the fundamental policies and philosophies of Communism and of Labour remain irreconcilably conflicting, and that accordingly the Communist Party must still be kept outside the pale. The *Daily Herald* and some leading Trade Unionists are already arguing that the logical next step is for the Communist Party in this country to dissolve itself and for its members to enter the Labour Party as individuals if they wish to enter it, but by no means to be admitted as a group.

Here are two points, liable to get confused, but essentially separate and different. The notion that the Communist Party ought now to dissolve itself rests on the assumption either that it is merely a parliamentary machine for fighting elections, or that the Labour Party is so much more than a parliamentary machine as to be an all-sufficient means of expression for the whole Socialist movement in this country. In fact, neither of these things can be maintained. The Communist Party is not merely an electoral instrument: it is a body of Socialists bound together by a common faith. And the Labour Party, on its side, is a federal body, existing mainly for parliamentary purposes, and by no means adequate to sustain the whole weight of Socialism. According to this line of argument, if the Communist Party ought to dissolve itself, why not the Fabian Society as well—for is not the Fabian Society also a body of Socialists affiliated to the Labour Party but refusing to merge its identity in a predominantly electoral body? It goes without saying that, if the Communist Party becomes part of the Labour Party, there will no more be Communist candidates in future than there are now Fabian candidates or Trade Union candidates. They will all alike be Labour candidates; but that will not prevent them from being personally and by chosen faith and allegiance Fabians or Trade Unionists or Communists as well.

Once again the constitutional argument breaks down. It would only hold if the Labour Party were to discard its federation and to become a completely unified and unifying expression of British Socialism—and this it has manifestly no intention of doing, nor would the Trade Unions allow it, even if the political leaders wished it to come about. The opponents of Communist affiliation are therefore driven back upon their final, and real, argument—that the creeds and philosophies of Labour and of Communism are irreconcilable, and that accordingly the supporters of the two must hold themselves resolutely apart. This line of argument will undoubtedly appeal to a number of the leaders and to a good many of the older members of the Trade Union rank and file. But will it appeal to the great majority. And is it likely to appeal to the constant steam of newcomers who are learning their Socialism now, under the direct impact of world war and impending world revolution? We think not.

It is, indeed, an exceedingly dangerous argument. For what it means, when its implications are analysed, is that Labour is not, and cannot become, a united force either in home or in international affairs. It holds up to us the prospect, in the forthcoming world struggle for power, of the world Labour movement, instead of uniting to stamp out Fascism and to defeat the coming capitalist bid for reinstatement, waging internal warfare between Communist and "Labour" or "Social Democrat," to the inevitable disaster of both. Even more immediately, it means that, when the armies of the United Nations reconquer France or revolution springs up on French soil, French Communists and French Socialists are to fight one another for power, instead of acting in unity. It means that there can be no real unity of purpose between the leaders of British Labour and those of the Soviet Union in making the peace. In short, it means that the disastrous divisions in the ranks of Labour, which gave Fascism its chance between the wars, are to be reproduced under even more perilous conditions. We assume that Stalin sees that to maintain centralised Communist discipline from Moscow destroys the chance of anti-Fascist unity in Europe, that he had this in mind when he ended the Comintern. The opponents of Communist affiliation will deny all this, and will maintain that there is no inconsistency in ostracising Communism at home and collaborating with it abroad. But how many of us will believe them? They will say that, in any event, they cannot be so untrue to their own faith as to gloss over the fundamental divergence which separates them from the Communists. But, for most of us, how fundamental is this divergence, and wherein does it consist?

Does the divergence lie in the belief of one party in revolution and an absolute disbelief in it by the other? Surely not. Surely most of us realise that a revolutionary situation is a possible contingency in any country, even though it appears far away from the present national temper. (Revolutions in these days come from the Right rather than from the Left and Social Democrats have not so far shown themselves adequate to meet the threat.) Or does the divergence lie in an absolute belief on the one side in the one-party Soviet State, and in the other in multi-party parliamentary government? Surely not. Even though we greatly prefer parliamentary institutions, we can all imagine circumstances in which it would be impossible for them to work; and surely all Socialists look forward to a drastic transformation of Parliament, even while they wish to retain it? Is the divergence, then, a matter of religion—of Soviet "anti-god" philosophy, as against our own movement's tolerance, or ignoring, of religious differences? For some, no doubt, this is the crux; but certainly not for the majority. For the majority, we believe, the overriding consideration will be, and should be, a belief in the unity of the working class—which includes the brain as well as the manual worker—as a necessary foundation for any truly democratic achievement in the rebuilding of our own British society or of the comity of Europe when the fighting is over.

This is, to our mind, the argument that must turn the scale. We cannot forget how the British Communists behaved, under orders from the Comintern, from 1939 up to the Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union. Their policy over that period left an open sore. But the need is to heal that sore as best we may—not to keep it open to endanger all our hopes and of all prospects of a decent settlement.

Memories of bitter years of strife inside the Labour movement, of unscrupulous tactics employed against those who should have been allies, local and national intrigues and personal rivalries—all these will be barriers against co-operation, even if affiliation wins the day at Whitsun. But within the Labour ranks there are many younger men and women who want more energetic leadership in a constructive Socialist movement; and there are, we believe, also many, particularly amongst those who have recently joined the Communist Party, who want a much less doctrinaire approach and a policy founded on the needs of British Socialism—which is what Moscow now tells them to put in the front of their thoughts. Here is a chance of unity on a new basis. The Communist application for affiliation should now be accepted, and the task of organising a genuine instead of a fake International should be taken in hand. More is at stake than "unity" in this country; that may take long to achieve even if the opponents of affiliation are now defeated. The formal withdrawal of the barrier between the two sections of the working-class movement gives a chance to render more effective assistance to the underground movement on the Continent, where the division no longer exists; it makes sensible and effective friendship with the U.S.S.R. far more possible; and it opens a way for an international Socialist leadership founded on the real needs of the workers in each of the countries who, it is surely not too much to hope, have learnt in the agonies of this war who are their enemies and who their friends.

# A LONDON DIARY

The other day when I was speaking about the Soviet-Polish problem to a University audience, one rash young man suggested in effect that Poles ought to be abolished. He was promptly rebuked as a "diversionist" by an able and quiet speaker, who explained that he was a member of the Communist Party. As I listened to him my hopes grew. He had an independent mind; he used none of the Party slogans; he said things that showed he was not always in agreement with all the Party line; and yet he was quite unmistakably and sincerely a Communist. I believe that there must be many young Communists like this. They realise that the conspiratorial mentality of the older leaders of the Communist Party comes from the days when Lenin and Trotsky had just succeeded in carrying through a revolution in a country where tactics were necessarily conspiratorial because of Tsarist repression. They want a Communism which in this country is based on a recognition of the traditions of the British working-class movement. I think they will welcome freedom from orders which come from a government whose colossal achievements do not include that of understanding the political position in the Western democracies. If such young men can join hands with young Labour enthusiasts, we now for the first time have a chance of a living socialist movement in Britain. That means first getting rid of Party Dinosaurs.

* * *

The R.A.F. has now succeeded in doing the kind of bombing which most people expected in the first week of the war—precision attacks on dams and power stations, followed by devastating raids on already disorganised and flooded towns. For the first time it seems possible, as Mr. Churchill suggested in his speech to Congress, that air raids might so demoralise and disorganise a community as to make invasion easy or even unnecessary. I think that some correspondents who have written to protest against the ghastly loss of civilian life involved in such raids are confused. They may shorten the war. These correspondents have failed to form in their minds the least idea of what invasion means. To invade France or Italy, for instance, which people have long been demanding, involves the complete destruction of towns on the coast and for many miles behind; civilian life takes its chance.

Good that there is still in this country the sense and humanity to object to the killing of civilians. By itself such bombing, one correspondent writes, does not fit in with the original aim of the British Government to break the power of the Nazis, whilst at the same time encouraging the people of Germany to overthrow their Government. But that is a reason not for objecting to raids that may end the war more quickly, but for raising a hue and cry against the lack of a clear offer of an "escape clause" to the people in Axis countries. Even now no one in Germany has been given any reason for believing that to turn against the Government and to insist on peace would be the prelude to a free and self-respecting life.

* * *

There is evidence that there are people ready to respond to such appeals. I have written about the remarkable renaissance going on amongst Munich students. It now appears from an address given by Gauleiter Giesler to the Nazi women's organisations of Munich that the Nazis themselves admit that the students were supported by 10–20 university professors. So far it seems they have only got hold of one, Professor Kurt Huber, who was accused of corrupting Nazi youth and beheaded. His wife is also said to have been arrested. Professor Huber was Professor of Psychology and Philosophy (his speciality was the Psychology of Music) and has lectured in Munich since 1920. He was 50 years old and entirely unpolitical. These "unpoliticals" have had no chance in Germany until now. They may yet be allies, and help to build a more tolerable future. But they will have to believe in us as the harbingers of decency and architects of a new Europe.

* * *

Some concern has been expressed amongst people interested in education by a recent remark of Mr. Butler, which suggested that the school leaving age would continue to be 14. I learn that this is a complete error. The Bill which is soon expected will raise the leaving age to 15 and I gather deal fairly comprehensively with a good many of the points for which we have all been agitating. I doubt if any decision has yet been reached about public schools. They loom very large in the public mind as symbols of the class society. They matter less, of course, than the creation for the first time in England (if that is what we are to have) of a proper educational system for everyone from the nursery school upwards. One reform which I expect to see included is the provision of a proper inspectorate and of standards of education and equipment for private schools. Many exist merely because of the snob view that the "private school" is socially superior. Incredible in these days, it is still true that any old dame or out of work ne'er-do-well can open a room of a house and call it a school, and that the local authorities cannot even get it inspected, as I recently discovered by making inquiries about a singularly bad case. Mr. Chuter Ede, who is now Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Board of Education, was chairman of an inquiry into private schools about ten years ago. I cannot believe that he will let this opportunity pass without seeing that this survival of the days of Dickens is finally swept away.

* * *

A friend gave me a most interesting account of a recent visit to the Queensberry Club, which looks after men and women of His Majesty's Forces at large in London. A large theatre in Old Compton Street with an auditorium holding 2,500 is packed nightly. The audience is entertained by a concert party, sees a film show, listens for twenty minutes or so to a speech by some public figure—several members of the Government, I am told, have appeared on the Queensberry Club stage—and then invades the stage itself and dances for the rest of the evening. There are three large canteens, one on each floor of the theatre, which serve thousands of meals at a cheap rate every evening. There is a Club Room and a Reading Room, all of which are open to you for four bob a year if you are a private or of N.C.O. rank; for ten shillings a year if you hold a commission. Nurses and members of A.R.P. organisations are eligible for membership. Analysing the sense of exhilaration which he derived from this admirable institution, he attributed it to three factors: the sense of democracy, the sense of success, and the complete absence of the charity-voluntary-worker atmosphere. The place was democratic, in the sense that nobody was interfered with and nobody patronised, exhorted, admonished; the rules were made by the management in consultation with the members. As a result the men felt the place their own and felt themselves free to say and do what they pleased. As usually happens in such cases everybody seemed on their best behaviour.

* * *

Most of those who met him in exile would have picked out the leader of the Polish-Jewish "Bund," S. Zygelboym, as a man who would never falter or despair. To him above all others belonged the glory of leading the half-armed workers of Warsaw in the magnificent defence of that city, after the Government and the High Command had fled. But, indeed, no adventure was too difficult or perilous for him. After the fall of Warsaw he somehow contrived to make his way in disguise across the whole breadth of Germany into the safety of Holland, which had not yet been invaded. He had been trained from boyhood to overcome almost any imaginable difficulty. The son of very poor Galician Jews, he was never sent to any regular school, and yet he had contrived with his quick wit and industry to become a well-educated man, who wrote we and with great effect in more than one languag What broke him in the end was the seemin impossibility of rousing Christendom to an comprehension of the fate which has overwhelme the Jewish race in Europe, or to any effectiv measures of rescue. Throughout his life he ha devoted all his energies and all his organisin gifts to the service of his own down-trodde people and the Socialist idea, and now there wa no more to be done. So has one tragedy in thi Party followed another. Its first representativ on the Polish National Council was Henry Ehrlich, who was executed in Russia; the secon was Zygelboym, who took his own life. I hea that the Bund has news—somewhat belated, o course—that the desperate struggle of the Jewish remnant of some 40,000 persons still linger in the cellars and among the cinders of the Warsaw ghetto.

* * *

The headmaster of Dulwich, Mr. C. H. Gilkes, startled the Royal Empire Society the other day, on the occasion of Mr. F. B. Malim's lecture on education in imperial subjects, by saying that in the schools there was to be found "a tremendous amount of what you might call *New Statesman* knowledge of the Empire—the grievances of the Indian Congress, labour conditions in the African copper belt, conditions of sugar cultivation in the West Indies, and so on—and a desire to know what the British Government is going to do to put these things right." Mr. Gilkes considered it important that lecturers on the Empire who went to the schools should be prepared to answer that sort of question. He mentioned that one lecturer was completely floored by a couple of such questions. He thought that they should be able to discuss candidly and honestly the difficulties which had arisen in certain parts of the Empire. Lord Elton, who was in the chair, said that it was easy for a speaker on the Empire to be floored by criticisms from readers of the *New Statesman*. With a complex unity like the British Empire it was impossible to be familiar with every detail. "The boys at school who are very glib with the criticisms they know about from the *New Statesman*, know very little about the British Empire; even the writers in the *New Statesman* know very little about the background of the problems. It is much easier to write a snappy and querulous paragraph about some problem in a colony if you have no knowledge and sympathy with the whole background of the history of that colony." He remembered hearing a history don in Oxford, who rather took the *New Statesman* view of the kind of problem to which the headmaster of Dulwich had referred, declare that "the English, of course, went to India to conquer it"—a statement, he thought, about as accurate as if he had said that the Norman Conquest took place in 1500. Lord Elton added that the proper thing to do in the schools would be in some way to wed together the point of view of the imperialist and that of the *New Statesman*!

* * *

Bucolic England in buzzing like a hive of infuriated bees—and with good reason. The officials responsible for arranging the issue of the new ration books seem to have forgotten the facts of rural life. One friend of mine lives near a village only three miles from a shopping-town and railway station (Henley) which is also his postal address. But his Food Office (Wokingham) is ten miles away as the crow flies—and almost twenty miles away by bus and train. Each of the three inhabitants of his cottage will have to make this journey on different days—and they will be lucky if they do make it, since the pressure on the already crowded buses will be quadrupled. Lord Woolton has recommended his local officials to use "common sense." Here's a way in which I suggest they should use it. Some people live far from any centre; but for many the problem would be solved if they were allowed to get their cards at the town they habitually go to.

Critic

## THIS ENGLAND

**A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R. H. Snoad.**

**Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

Because it is considered "not quite nice" for music-hall performers to show their braces or too wide an expanse of shirt on the stage, the Board of Trade are allowing them to obtain double-breasted suits, by special licence.—The *Evening News.*

ENSA describes as without foundation an allegation by an actor at a British Equity meeting that, members of the Forces have had to be locked in at its performances. —*Daily Telegraph.*

A dispute over the right of miners to use bad language to an official in the pit may cause a strike of nearly 25,000 men in the Doncaster coalfield.—Daily press.

Scientists are inclined to believe that the hawks and weasels are useful to a bird and animal population by killing off the weak and ailing. The hawks act as doctors do to a human population in fact.—From a letter in the *Oban Times.*

Cat, adult male, brown, good home wtd., rural or suburban pref.; no children.—Advert. in *Dundee Courier and Advertiser.*

We must make mention of the wonderful result of the efforts of Miss ——, her willing helpers and generous contributors, who made it possible to provide tea for all the candidates. As one visitor said, things such as this preserve some of the sanities of life, which are going so fast.—*The Deanery Magazine.*

## THE AMERICAN NEGRO

[By a Special Correspondent]

The war has elevated the problem of the American negroes to the rank of a world problem. For the 13,000,000 Americans who are descended of African slaves, the abolition of slavery meant little more than transference to a condition of social serfdom. From chattels they became wage-slaves and share-croppers; their material plight remained virtually unchanged. In the cities they are segregated in crowded slum areas. As workers they are confined to the most menial occupations. As share-croppers they live abjectly, in perpetual debt to their white landlords. They are barred from many universities, and though they are not barred from the professions, prevalent social taboos compel them to exercise their callings exclusively amongst their own kind. While the right to vote is legally theirs, the poll tax, illiteracy, indifference, and sometimes open intimidation, prevent all but a small minority from exercising that right in the South. A bill to repeal the poll-tax was defeated by a Senate filibuster last November. In the North they may sit in the same trains and cinemas as white people, but they are refused accommodation in white hotels and they are rigidly excluded from white residential districts. Below the Mason-Dixon line segregation is absolute. There are separate trains, separate buses, separate cinemas, separate restaurants, separate everything. The Southern negroes need not, however, wear a yellow star. Their badge is their colour.

The American negroes are angry on two primary scores. A confidential Government survey completed in June of 1940 revealed that 38 per cent. of the negroes interrogated believed it more important to make democracy work at home than to beat the Axis Powers. The same survey showed that job discrimination was the greatest cause of discontent (47.5 per cent.); next came wage discrimination (22.5 per cent.); while segregation and unfair allocation of housing accounted for the rest.

There are some 5,500,000 negro workers in the United States, two-thirds of them concentrated in the Southern States. Of the total number only a few thousand can be counted as really skilled. In the Southern States negro labour constitutes one-third to one-half of the unemployed reserve; in the Northern States one-quarter to one-third. In St. Louis, Missouri, a negro demonstration paraded outside the U.S. Cartridge Co. carrying banners which read: "20,000 workers employed in this plant—and not one negro in production." In Akron, Ohio, scene of a particularly acute labour shortage last year, negro women picketed the U.S. Employment Bureau carrying signs: "We have husbands, brothers and sweethearts fighting, while jobs are refused us." Discrimination is by no means confined to the employers. The trade unions are almost equally guilty. Negroes are barred from membership in all but a very few of the A.F. of L. Unions. The C.I.O. unions are open to negro membership, but even here the principle of race equality remains fettered by the prejudice of the rank and file. In the automobile industry alone stoppages have occurred in three major plants—the Chrysler, the Packard and the Hudson—over the employment of negro labour. In the case of the Chrysler stoppage of 1942, union officials had to inform the recalcitrants that "the union's policy calls for equal treatment of negroes, and so does the American constitution." On the whole, the union movement has been making gratifying progress towards a more democratic attitude.

Even in the deep South the unions are evincing a more liberal spirit. To give but one example: the 41st annual convention of the Alabama Confederation of Labour, meeting at the end of April, 1942, passed a resolution demanding the abolition of the poll tax, equal educational opportunities for negroes, and equal treatment in general for black and white. As far as negro employment is concerned, there has been a perceptible if painfully slow improvement in the situation over the course of the past year. If the results achieved seem small, this is not due to any lack of directive on the part of the Administration. In June, 1941, President Roosevelt addressed a letter to the Office of Production Management in which he declared that "no nation combating totalitarianism can afford arbitrarily to exclude large segments of the population from the defence industries." Nine days later the President promulgated the now famous Executive Order 8802, outlawing racial discrimination in industry. To implement this order, a Committee on Fair Employment Practices was established. Latterly, acute shortage of man power is compelling a more liberal attitude towards employment of negroes. It would be too much to expect any radical improvement within the measurable future. The Fair Employment Committee has been hamstrung from the beginning by popular prejudice and political exigency. In the Southern States the negroes total 22 per cent. of the available labour force; they comprise little more than .1 per cent. of the personnel being trained for defence work. This is the problem that the Committee must cope with.

In the Forces, too, the negro finds himself treated as an inferior being. It is not so much the practice of segregation, even though the stigma of racial inferiority is implicit in it. Segregation the negroes would accept, albeit with some resentment—if only they were permitted to serve on terms of equality with the white men. It is because equality of service does not exist that the negroes are angry. In urging equality they often point to the record of the negro 15th Infantry Division which, in 1½ years of the last war, suffered 40 per cent. casualties, never lost a single prisoner and never yielded a foot of ground.

The existence of a single negro brigadier general hardly mitigates the fact that with negligibly few exceptions negro soldiers have no hope of attaining commissioned rank in combat units. A small number are permitted to attend officer candidate schools, but graduation qualifies them for reserve commissions only—apart from doctors and chaplains, no coloured reserve officers are posted to negro combat units. The first batch of negro officers, however, has graduated from the officer candidate school in England.

The Air Force until 1942 was white as white. Early that year the Army agreed to the establishment of a single negro air training centre to operate as an adjunct of Tuskegee University. The negro press threw out its chest a bit when it was announced that an all-negro pursuit squadron was to be organised. But at the same time it pointed out that quantitatively the concession granted weighed little more than a crumb. Eight months after its graduation, the first all-negro pursuit squadron is still in America. Nor has there been any indication that other negro squadrons will be trained.

The American Navy accepted negro ratings during the World War, but since 1922 negroes have been excluded from all positions above that of mess-boy. It was an act almost providential in its irony that one of the outstanding heroes of the attack on Pearl Harbour should have been the negro mess-boy aboard the battleship Arizona. The mess-boy, Dorie Miller, has since been decorated for carrying his dying commander to a less exposed position, and then manning a machine gun he had never been taught to man until he was ordered below. Dorie Miller's exploit fed the negro demand for the right to serve as something more than kitchen help in the Navy. On April 9 Navy Secretary Knox announced that negroes would be accepted in reserve components of the Navy, but that it was not contemplated that they would be commissioned. Negro ratings were to be confined to shore duties and control units; later there were to be a number of small coastal vessels with all-negro crews; and in the still more remote future the hope was held out of destroyers manned by negro crews under white officers. Instead of mollifying the negroes, this act of condescension only angered them. Negro spokesmen described it as an "insult," as a "Nazi attitude."

Since Pearl Harbour alone three negro civilians have been brutally done to death by white mobs, though it is true that there has been no lynching for almost six months now. The dignity of the uniform has conferred little advantage on the American negro. In the Southern States it has, if anything, had a negative effect. Brought up to regard the negro as the white man's pack-animal, the prejudiced Southerner cannot help feeling that a uniformed negro constitutes a challenge to the superiority of the American Herrenvolk.

[*To be concluded*]

## THE YOUNG ENTRY

The Board of Education White Paper on Youth Registration in 1942 is a document of unusual humanity. This may be because the interviewing of the 16- and 17-year-olds who were not already attached to some existing activity was carried out by small voluntary panels, whose non-official opinions have percolated through the Education Authorities to the general review. The leisure-time occupation of youth is, of course, a large-scale problem. Nearly half of the boys and about three-quarters of the girls are "unattached"; it is hoped that some 20 per cent. of these joined some organisation as a result of the interviews. But the facts revealed by the report are of more lasting import. The elementary school children who leave school at 14, the age when real education begins for the privileged minority, and the secondary-school children who start work at 16, are living the lives of adults, with their further training dependent on what they may individually pick up at their jobs, and with their pleasure dependent on scanty intervals in their working hours. The vast majority of their jobs have no value as training; they are purely repetitive routine, taking advantage of the ungrudging vitality and patience of youth for industrial purposes while the head remains vacant and the hand unskilled. That large problem, as is implicit in the White Paper, can only be solved by an educational revolution. Short of that, it cannot be tackled wholesale; for the children who have left school are individuals, and the various bodies can only fill our social gaps, even partially, by treating them individually. The numerous societies are thus justified. There is room for Scouts and Guides and the various clubs and institutes which rank as youth organisations, as well as the pre-military bodies like the Air Training Corps and the Sea Cadets, and the Girls' Training Corps. There is the added advantage that smallish movements, locally dispersed, should provide opportunity for democratic leadership among the boys and girls themselves.

As far as they go, the boys and girls who belong to these bodies are getting a modicum of education, and also some normal adolescent social life. The White Paper observes that they tend to join a body which will give them some specific training like the A.T.C. or the Sea Cadets, or in the case of the girls, the Land Army courses. The popularity of the First Aid training is, one suspects, due to a less lofty motive; it is generally considered a soft option. The report does not deal with some elements in the choice of activity. A friend of mine who runs a group in a London Youth Institute tells me that some of her girls, after registration, wanted to join the Girls' Training Corps. They liked the courses suggested but were deterred by the demand for £2 10s. for uniform (and not one in which they would like to walk out with their boys), and coupons to buy it. Both the money and the coupons, for people who can afford only cheap clothes and who can therefore hardly clothe themselves decently on the coupon allowance, are out of the question. This must tend to make the G.T.C. a bourgeois body.

Yet the youth organisations certainly fill a felt want. Most boys and many girls are strongly gregarious during the growing-up period. The report says that boys are influenced in their choice of activity by wanting to be with their friends, girls not so much so, unless they have a "boy," which is decisive. Young people generally need collective activity, to enjoy group friendship and play, particularly as relaxation after long hours of work. My friend, once more, told me that the other day one of her group said, "I was so done that I had to go home at four and have a lie down on my bed." Just the sort of absenteeism the virtuous disapprove, the more by token that the girl felt strong enough to come to the Institute at half-past seven. But the virtuous, remarked my informant, may be unable to imagine what it is like to begin work at eight, and continue till six, with ten minutes' break in the morning and half-an-hour for lunch, bending and straightening, bending and straightening, lifting and pushing the heavy weight of a tailor's iron, and breathing the fumes of hot dye. Children doing work like that have no energy for lessons at night. It is significant that the report shows that in Coventry, a town chosen for analysis, the least popular choice was evening classes. But they do need some fun, and the clubs are probably doing their souls and bodies good teaching them ballroom dancing as well as civics. They are practising citizens, the small slaves at the base of the pyramid, and they richly earn their pleasure.

But what of the still-unattached youth? How does it spend its spare time? The Scottish section of the report says:

> The five major leisure occupations of the unattached youth of Scotland are: 1, the cinema; 2, the dance-hall; 3, the billiard-saloon; 4, the company of the opposite sex; and 5, "hanging about" waiting for some opportunity of contact with the other four.

And the diagnosis would probably serve for England and Wales. It should be emphasised that this is said in no spirit of blame or of scorn; the report thinks it entirely natural, even if a 17-year-old boy who replied that he would be delighted to come to be interviewed, and would bring his wife, is a trifle old-fashioned and exceptional for our day.

But the White Paper repeats with variations a major theme, which is that far too many of the children do not belong to youth activities because they literally have no leisure time. They work long hours; they have to travel to their work. Many do double jobs, serving in fish-and-chip shops in the evenings, or ushering in cinemas. The discrepancy between the membership of boys and girls is not by any means accounted for by greater individualism in the female sex, nor by the absence of organisations for girls, though these are real factors. It is mainly due to their heavier share of household work. Many boys are kept from joining clubs because they help in the garden or on the farm. Only one girl in a thousand does not help in the house. And that means bed-making, dusting, cleaning, dish-washing, cooking, washing and mending her own clothes, and probably those of her father and brother; making a large part of her own outfit, astonishingly smart and becoming, such is the skill of our girls with that instrument of precision, the needle. All that: "And then you may go to bed, Betsinda," as the Countess Gruffanuff said to her maid at the end of the equivalent Victorian list. Has a sixteen-year-old girl time or strength after this to do extra training?

The White Paper's recommendations have been adopted by the Government. They are admirably sensible. A 48-hours week for young people of 16 and 17; a 44 hours for those of 14 and 15; employment as near home as possible (an hour's journey is the mild suggestion); staggered hours to facilitate travel; adequate canteen meals in factories; discouragement of activities which leave too little time for sleep, an inquiry into "double employment."

The most cheering part of this excellent document is its praise of the Young Entry. This is relayed from the Education Authorities who organised the interviewing. They say that the children, these children whom we work so hard and teach so little, are splendid stuff, frank, friendly, alert, independent. For all the community does for them, they might be savages, and it is astonishing that so high a proportion of them make their unpromising circumstances into the soil of promise.

FREDA WHITE

# THE VALUE OF WILD BIRDS

How many misguided country people think that all birds except the robin and the wren are bad for crops? This question was asked in one of Critic's recent London Diaries, when he quite rightly suggested that out of the muddle of the Ministry of Agriculture's recent efforts to create sparrow clubs, the public should be given some clearer guidance about our wild birds and their usefulness. On the other hand, many people think that all birds are our "feathered friends"; and the landed gentry preserve the tradition that the only birds that matter are pheasants, grouse and partridge, and the rest of the bird populace, together with ramblers, motorists, the Home Guard and all other trespassers into the sacred precincts of the game covert should be hung upon the gibbet as vermin, or better still, exterminated from the land altogether. It takes at least ten years to begin to know much about the habits of wild birds, and as these will often vary with changing conditions in the countryside the field-naturalist must ever be afield to keep his knowledge up to date.

"The devil of the hills has wings" was an expression used by a Cumbrian fell-farmer to deprecate the carrion crow amongst his lambing flocks, and the judgment of the court of naturalists has long condemned the carrion crow, the wood-pigeon and the house-sparrow as the three birds whose habits have always been against the farmer's efforts to grow his crops. But this does not excuse the rook being dragged in to the slaughter with the crow, nor the hedge-sparrow and the tree-sparrow with the ubiquitous house-sparrow. The fact that we lose about one-tenth of our farm and garden crops to the ravages of insect pests, mice and slugs, every season renders doubly valuable the habits of those birds who spend most of their time feeding upon the pests. That is why nobody is so foolish as to claim as "vermin" the purely insectivorous birds like the warblers, of which the so-called hedge-sparrow or dunnock is a relative with no connection with the true sparrows excepting by name, or the swallows, the lapwing plovers, the starlings and the wagtails. But there are borderline cases like the rook, which feeds a lot upon scraps it can scavenge from the countryside, even the rubbish tips, and fallen grain as well as insects; the thrushes and blackbirds which follow their spring raids upon the caterpillars with summer raids upon the soft fruits, wild or cultivated; or the larks which may eat winter wheat when their flocks meet with severe weather. But these are instances that call for local verdicts, not the condemnation of a whole nation of rooks or black-birds, and it is only when their numbers are excessive in local districts that their harmful habits outweigh the value of their useful deeds.

In the country every hand is raised against the hawk, and in the towns there is still a suspicious dislike for the bird of prey. Thanks to the grand old English gentleman, like the classic Squire Osbaldeston, serving his country mainly by huntin' and shootin' six or seven days a week, our agricultural policy grew up subservient to sport and all its traditions. When country squires lost much of their totalitarian power with the removal of harsh laws that reserved for them alone the sports that ravished acres of farmland held by serf labour, agriculture grew slowly into an industry. But, as I pointed out in an article on "Birds and Agriculture" in the *Quarterly Review* earlier in the war, it has failed to shake off the shackles of sport. To defend the wasteful practice of mass pheasant rearing and partridge preservation, the sporting press and the cartridge manufacturers have put over to us a lot of propaganda about the pheasant's usefulness on the land as a destroyer of wireworms, complete with lists of insects found in the crops of pheasants shot in Surrey market gardens, and about the partridge as the little brown insect-eater of the fields. We had always been aware of the fact that the pheasant is first cousin of the domestic poultry whose fondness for grain and garden crops needs no introduction, and every farmer and gardener knew of the bird's ravages amongst the peas and beans. But the habits of the wilder partridge are more difficult to observe and we were inclined to believe, as we were always brought up to believe, that the squire's partridge was a useful insect-eater until the very thoroughly organised national investigation into its food, made from Oxford University the other year, surprised us all by showing that the partridge is no more useful than the wood-pigeon to farmer or gardener, for only 2½ per cent. of its menu comprises insects, and these are chiefly used to rear its chicks during a brief fortnight in summer; nine-tenths of its diet is destructive to clover, grasses, grain, leaves, sugar-beet and seeds.

Indeed, to be fair to our struggle to grow our food we must quickly reverse these traditions of "vermin" that selfish sport left in the country mind. The real vermin amongst the farmers' crops are the pheasants and partridge of the game preserver, and we cannot afford to have them in these times when their protection is neither useful for food nor the destruction of pests, and only war profiteers have the leisure and income to shoot them. On the other hand, the birds that swung by the neck on the gamekeeper's gibbet ever since Richard Jeffries wrote his entrancing *Gamekeeper at Home*—the dashing sparrowhawk, the hovering kestrel falcon, the hooting tawny owl, the little owl, the barn-owl, the screeching jay, the rook, the tall, lanky heron, and many more—must be spared the gun, the poletrap and the egg poisoned with strychnine. They must be treated as our allies, helping us to grow more food. For the kestrel, like those other mistaken "vermin," the stoat and weasel, feeds mainly upon field-mice and voles. The heron feeds largely upon young rats, voles, frogs and eels—including the alien little owl whose character has been slandered by almost every game-preserver even since a Cambridge University biologist organised a nation-wide survey of its food in the game coverts and cleared its character of these accusations—and destroys the rats, mice and beetles that ravage the crops. The reason why we have so many swarms of house-sparrows destroying the corn crops is that the game-preservers long ago reduced Nature's natural "brake" upon their increase, the sparrowhawk, to such insignificant numbers that now we cannot keep the sparrows within check.

A recent meeting of the Lancashire Branch of the National Farmers' Union protested against the heavy damage to wartime crops by game, especially pheasants and hares. War or no war, many estates have maintained a surprisingly large head of game. At Chorley and in Wyresdale farmers lost a lot of corn to pheasants, and one Liverpool farmer had 3½ acres of winter beans and 30,000 spring cabbages destroyed by pheasants and hares. It is unfortunate that so many of the pest-officers appointed by the County War Agricultural Executive Committees with almost totalitarian powers are ex-gamekeepers or game-preservers, who shoot the proletariat rook while affording the aristocratic pheasant a "reserved occupation" feeding upon twice as much grain and crops as the rook would touch in a year, but not half so many insects.

There are 423 birds on the British list. Five of these I would name as "vermin" to our desperate wartime food-growing policy—the house sparrow, carrion-crow, wood-pigeon, pheasant and partridge. In special circumstances in special places, two, the rook and song thrush, may be destructive enough to call for repression. Over 200 have no influence upon agriculture, and over 200 are extremely valuable co-operators in the destruction of pests and weeds.

Eric Hardy

# WE SAVAGES

It is reported—on what authority I know not—that one of the official plans for the post-war period is concerned not only with providing every school-child with at least one good meal a day but with teaching it table-manners. That, I think, is a good thing: food in plenty must be given to the young human animal, but manners must be added in order that he may not grow up like a wild beast or a seagull. A great part of good manners, I admit, cannot be defended on any rational ground. There is no purely utilitarian purpose to be served, for example, by instructing small children always to replace the teaspoon on the right side of the teacup. As the child stirs the sugar in the cup, again, it naturally likes to make a tinkling sound, and there seems to be no reason, except the mystical tyranny of good manners, why it should not make this noise. As an infant, I used to like to drink tea out of a saucer and first to blow it into coolness as I had seen a ploughman doing in my grandfather's kitchen; and I thought my uncle unreasonable when one day, as I was lapping a saucerful of tea on the table, he genially caught the back of my head and forced my face down into the hot tea. I was doing nobody any harm; I was making at least one person happy; yet I had offended against a code of good manners, and my uncle evidently thought that I should be discouraged in the interests of civilisation from behaving so Epicureanly. Being now of a slightly more mystical disposition than I then was, I think he was right.

After all, manners are one of the few things that have raised a number of European races above the level of the barbarian. There may seem, at first sight, to be little sense in some of the taboos of the table; but, if you compare us Europeans with the Trobriand Islanders, you will realise at once that it is mainly in our table manners that we prove our superiority to them. How civilised English life seems when we turn aside from reports of the habits of head-hunters to books of etiquette in which we learn of the right use of every knife, fork and spoon. Read, for example, the section on "How Various Foods Should be Eaten" in Lady Troubridge's *Book of Etiquette*. "Soup," she tells us, to begin with, "should be eaten with a tablespoon, drinking silently from the side of the spoon." How civilised seems even the convention according to which English men and women "eat" soup and at the same time "drink" it silently! No use of language could be more unreasonable, yet how right it is—the ritualistic use of the word "eat," with the more scientifically accurate word "drink" following, to remind us that we live on two planes, the common-sense and the mystical!

Do not regard such matters as trivial. Delicate distinctions at the table may be as important as delicate distinctions in the prose of the masters. Who knows how much English culture may owe to such rules as: "All puddings and sweet dishes which are sufficiently substantial to make it possible should be eaten with a small fork. If necessary a dessertspoon is used as well as a fork for fruit tarts, or, in the case of ices or fruit salad, for example, a dessertspoon only is used." All such injunctions, however arbitrary, impose duties on us; and we are all the better for having duties to perform. I for one feel better, a more civilised man as I obey Lady Troubridge's instructions: "When eating cheese (which is seldom served at formal dinners), small pieces of cheese should be pushed with the knife-end on to small pieces of bread or biscuit, and conveyed to the mouth with thumb and finger; cheese should not be eaten from the end of the knife."

There are natural rebels who dislike all these rules and regulations of behaviour—boys who think it absurd to take off their caps to their mothers in the street—undergraduates who see no reason why they should not sit in a public-house with their feet on the bar—girls who shriek out their secrets before strangers in railway trains—all of them offenders against the ritual of etiquette. Yet what a world it would be if human beings did not behave as Lady Troubridge advises them to behave! She seems to me in her instructions to be a perfect guide to the Elysian world. In the matter of raising the hat, for instance, who could suggest an improvement on her gently offered advice? "It is not enough," she writes, "to know when to raise the hat, one must also know the proper manner of doing it. Profound and elaborate bows are utterly out of date and look like affectation. While lifting the hat one should incline the head slightly and smile. But it must be remembered that the unmannerly habit of touching the hat, instead of lifting it, is an indication of sheer laziness and lack of courtesy." I once knew a man who, when on his way to a public-house about noon, would look up at a window where an invalid used to sit with his wife and would take off his hat with one of the old-fashioned courtly bows. On his way back from the public house two hours later, however, when he looked up at the window he would lift his hat by the back of the brim and give an imitation of the song of the cuckoo. Civilisation demands that neither of these extremes of unconventionality in hat-raising should be indulged in.

When we remember how much we owe to the amenities of good manners, it seems strange that etiquette has never yet been a subject taught in schools and treated as seriously as Latin or mathematics. The majority of the English race, probably, do not know at the present day how to address a letter to a bishop. Hundreds of thousands of them are ignorant, even, of the right way in which to show a lady into a taxicab. Here, as Lady Troubridge tells us, "the lady enters first, the man assisting her. She sits on the farthest side from the door by which she entered, whether it is right or left. This obviates any difficulty for the man in having to step across her feet to reach his seat. In alighting, the man gets out first and assists the lady to alight by holding out his right arm, on which she leans as she steps to the ground." That, it seems to me, rather than the date of the Battle of Austerlitz, is the sort of thing every schoolboy ought to know.

Schoolgirls, too, have lessons of importance to learn about the etiquette of the taxicab. As Lady Troubridge writes: "A word of caution will not be amiss here. Making every allowance for changed points of view and the disappearance of many old conventions, no woman or girl should drive in a taxicab with a man who is not her escort, unless she has very good reason for doing so. All question of convention apart, it is not prudent." Truer word was never spoken.

Of a multitude of such trifling matters is the art of living made; and it is good to learn that a knowledge of them will be made an essential part of post-war education. Young Etonians and Harrovians will then be taught that in the home "disparaging comments on the food are ill-bred," and that, to say the least of it, it is incorrect "to fill the mouth overfull, to sneeze, cough, or choke noisily, to eat incorrectly, to tuck the dinner-napkin under the chin or to wave it about." They will mould their conduct in the theatre on principles laid down in the sentences: "Clapping hands is the natural language of delight. Very young infants clap their hands when they are happy. Children clap their hands to express their pleasure. And other people clap their hands to show appreciation and enjoyment. But stamping of feet, whistling or noisy acclamation of any kind is bad form." If the gallery-urchins of my Victorian youth had known this, they would not have shown their appreciation of rebel Irish plays with continuous shouts of "Three cheers for the Boers!" and, "Hell roast the Queen!" and in the absence of such noisy acclamations parts of the plays might have been almost audible.

The next generation, educated in the rhythm of good manners, will never, it is to be hoped, behave like this. Circumspect behaviour will be the universal rule, and the courtesies of the Louis-Quatorze days will return.

What a golden vista lies before us—a universal equality of good manners! And, after all, of what use is universal education without them? Is it not more important to know how to lift one's hat properly than how to decline *mensa*? I for one knew boys scarcely above the level of the beasts who were able to decline *mensa*.

Y.Y.

## BEAU GESTE

The Anglo-Soviet aid and friendship pact
Achieves its anniversary celebration
Emerging, not unhopefully, intact
After a twelvemonth of co-operation;
The Comintern commits self-immolation
To seal the Marxist truce with capital,
World Communism is in liquidation—
What of the Fascist International?

Moscow renounces old evangelism
And casts all foreign communists adrift.
The global strategy of Communism
She ends to heal an ideologic rift
And earns a comparable birthday gift
From our democracy imperial,
A diplomatic stroke at least as swift
Against the Fascist International.

Our Soviet comrades' *camaraderie*
Which prompts this gesture, wholly altruistic
Wins confidence from Britain's *bourgeoisie*
Expressed in tributes warmly eulogistic,
But our Ally, while not un-optimistic,
Awaits developments more practical
And notes our policy is dualistic
Towards the Fascist International.

Trust, confidence and mutual satisfaction
Will never to complete perfection grow,
While we back Europe's forces of reaction
To fight our ally as their common foe.
Red Revolution gets its knock-out blow,
Appeasement saps democracy's morale.
The Treaty has but nineteen years to go—
What of the Fascist International?

Sagittarius

## RECENT MUSIC

The three concerts of modern French music, given at the Wigmore Hall, were chiefly interesting for the light they shed on what has been happening to music of all kinds in the last fifty years or so. Fauré was not too well represented in the first concert. At the very end of his life, when *L'Horizon Chimèrique* and String Quartet, op. 121, were written, that hardening of imaginative arteries which eventually afflicts most artists, seems to have set in. The beautiful technique is still there, of course, and the stylistic distinction; but the sap has ceased to rise in the tree, there is too little variation of tempo, too little vigour and impetus, too little of that flow of invention, that wonderful dovetailing which make the works of Fauré's early and middle period so entrancingly lovely to listen to. I am aware that *L'Horizon Chimèrique*, in particular, is generally considered a masterpiece; but, with the best will in the world, I have always been disappointed by its dryness, and put off by the extraordinary malapropism of the accompaniment figure which introduces *La mer est infinie*. On this occasion, too, the songs were ill served by Gaston Richer, and the quartet by the rigidity and perfunctory phrasing of the performers. The second concert, devoted to the work of Milhaud and Poulenc, was more satisfactory. Both Maggie Teyte and Peter Pears, who sang Milhaud's *Poèmes Juifs* and Poulenc's *Tel jour, telle Nuit* respectively, are ideally suited to interpret that delicately passionate music. The Poulenc songs are uneven: the note of excitement or anger causes some of the shorter ones to go off like the more disappointing kind of cracker; but when the composer settles down to expatiate on a nobler emotion, as in "*Nous avons fait la Nuit*," the result is genuinely moving. The third concert, consisting entirely of Ravel, was again a mixed pleasure. To be sure, Miss Kathleen Long played with extraordinary taste and perception (to specialise, as she does, in Mozart is also a guarantee of excellence in French music), and the pianism of the *Sonatine*, of *Miroirs* and of *Jeux d'Eau* reminds one that the Liszt of the later *Années de Pélérinade* is a better model than Brahms or even Beethoven. But, listening to the eccentric *Chansons madécasses* and the curiously vague *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* (both most intelligently sung by Sophie Wyss), one could not help reflecting vengefully on the fatal influence of the *Sacre tu·Printemps* on a whole generation of composers. The exquisite harmony, the classic outline of Ravel's Quartet, of *Daphnis et Chloé*, of *l'Heure Espagnole*, of *Schéhérazade*, here give place to the angular, the muddy, and the facetious.

The second of Walter Goehr's concerts, on May 15th, was something of a disappointment—to me at any rate. The repeat performance of Britten's *Les Illuminations* lacked the brilliance and incisiveness—in fine, the illumination—of the first; and I must admit that I find the Spenser Sonnet of Van Dieren most unpleasant. The texture of this "song" is monotonously thick, the vocal part stuffed willy-nilly into the interstices of a horribly sticky fabric. What Mr. Cecil Gray means by talking of Bellini, in this connection, I am at a loss to understand. Wagner would be much nearer the mark. The best things in the concert were Dowland's wonderful *Lachrymae*—short works of great rhythmic and harmonic ingenuity—and Webern's *Five Pieces* for String Orchestra, which seemed to me among the best atonal music I have ever heard. Originally written for string quartet, these pieces sound much more agreeable in the present version. Whether they amount to much, as a whole, I should not care to say; they certainly contain some beautiful and surprising sequences of sound.

The Gerald Cooper concert on May 17th deserved to be better attended than it was. The programme was an all-Mozart one and contained the Quartet in F (K590), the D Major String Quintet, and the seldom heard Horn Quintet (K407). A programme better designed for pure and sustained delight could hardly be devised. The Blech quartet played with understanding and a fine tone, though not invariably with impeccable finish; and Dennis Brain's solo horn was, as usual, an astonishment of tone and phrasing. The Andante of the Horn Quintet is especially noteworthy, being written in the style of an operatic aria.

There have lately been two remarkably interesting and praiseworthy broadcasts: a studio performance of Tchaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin* and a complete performance of Holst's *Planets*. The former was probably the best rendering of this most romantic and lyrical of operas heard in this country in the past twenty-five years. The cuts were not considerable, the linking material exemplary and very well spoken, the singing good. Enormous pains had evidently been taken with this production, which ought certainly to be rewarded by an early repeat. While on the subject of opera, I should mention a memorable performance, by the Sadler's Wells company, of *La Traviata* on May 18th. The lovely dresses designed by Sophie Fedorovitch, the beautifully studied performances of Miss Joan Cross (alas! that she now so seldom consents to sing), and of Peter Pears, made a whole that we should like to experience again. A very welcome respite from the harshness of wartime. Mr. Pears's *mezza voce* singing is extremely beautiful; in the passages where a more heroic style is required (*e.g.* the Brindisi in the first act) he still has some way to go, but the quality of his voice encourages one to hope that he will in the end acquire the heavier guns.

It was an interesting, nostalgic, and on the whole reassuring experience to hear Holst's *Planets* given in full again after what seemed a long interval. I had not expected that this work would bring me the excitement and rapture which I felt on first hearing it, soon after the last war; yet I must record my impression that on the whole the suite has worn better than any other English music written at the same date. The one serious blot on the work is the bounderish Jupiter, which carries a peculiarly English branch of vulgarity gratuitously far. Otherwise the various movements are both deeply musical and poetically evocative. Mars, Venus, Saturn and Neptune (all, significantly enough, slow movements except the first) seem to me now the most original, Venus the most sustained in inspiration. It is time the whole thing were re-recorded. And what about the *Hymn of Jesus*?

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

## THE MOVIES

**"Cabin in the Sky," at the Empire**

**"We Dive at Dawn," at the Leicester Square**

"The most unusual film ever made," declare the headlines outside the Empire. Well, *Cabin in the Sky* isn't quite that. It has an all-negro cast. It is a musical comedy with religion and tears: unusual certainly. But there was *Green Pastures*, more unusual and a better film, and somewhere—whether made or not, I don't know—there is the Welles film of Duke Ellington, whose share in the present film is disappointing. Duke Ellington and his orchestra provide the musical accompaniment and make one appearance on the screen, but alas! the music they play is not Ellington's. It seems an incredible waste of opportunities; for any other good band could have done the job as well.

That is my only complaint against *Cabin in the Sky*. Granted the musical comedy background, I don't see how the director, Vincente Minnelli, could possibly have done better. His stars act and sing beautifully. Ethel Waters is a delightful artist who can introduce a tremolo into the purest of voices, and her performance is offset by Rochester's melodious croak and Louis Armstrong's trumpet tones. Angels and devils wrestle for the soul of Rochester, who gambles and wins a sweepstake ticket and has a fancy girl in town; and dreams take us to the precincts of heaven and hell. Negro humour and charm are cunningly exploited in a number of ways; just to look at and listen to *Cabin in the Sky* knocks our paleface shows silly. And though I can't help regretting that the music isn't more strongly in character, I must mention that there are some taking tunes and that the director achieves some brilliant rhythmical effects with his photography.

*We Dive at Dawn* is a cut above most of the war thrillers one meets in the dark. A British submarine goes out to get a German battleship, and gets it, by the most artful of dodges, in the Baltic. The action, the officers and crew, the bits of drama at home are skilfully knit together, and there is a long, brilliantly nervous sequence when the enemy is sighted and approached. Asquith's direction is more than competent, and John Mills gives a good performance as the commander of the submarine.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

**Indian Dancers and Musicians, at the Ambassadors**

Both the dances and the music at the Ambassadors would perhaps strike a European as lacking in third dimension. This is a very important point. We are inclined to exaggerate the importance of perspective in the arts whether it be visual or aural. For instance, in Indian dancing the movements of the dancer are related by their continuity and have no plastic relationship. Even in the groupings one fails to see any depth. And so with the music, which even in the ensemble playing is devoid of any kind of harmonic arrangement. But both in the dancing and the music this lack of a "body" is more than made up with subtlety, grace, and what might be called "decorativeness" in the best sense of the word. And throughout one can notice an underlying symbolism which only the most highly developed and sophisticated arts can consistently bear.

Rafiq Anwar, the principal dancer, must not be judged by rigorous Indian standards. The most traditional and authentic dances of India cannot be easily transplanted on to a West End stage. Anwar realises this and uses more miming than *mudras* to get out of the difficulty. This would have been an excellent expedient if his miming had been better. As it is, his hands seem more expressive when he does more abstract gestures than when weaving garlands or shooting with a bow and arrow. He has not the technique or the fluidity of movement of the best dancers London has seen, Madhavan or Sohan Lal, for instance. But he has abundant grace, particularly in his more restrained moments, as in his quiet arresting entry in *Deevali Puja*. Lalita has moments of eloquent grace in her Spring Dance and in her other dances she achieves both precision and severity. Bhupen Mukerjee is a resourceful and versatile musician, at ease with almost any instrument and Narayana Menon's *veena* playing is in the real traditional Carnatic style.

# Correspondence

## POST-WAR SOCIALISM

Sir,—Your timely criticism of the proposals of the Wardlaw-Milne group of M.P.s is welcome. I feel, however, that the time has now arrived to carry that criticism a stage farther. We should now be considering what we can do to show the peoples of Europe that there is both an alternative to that policy and to Hitlerism. The Atlantic Charter is hopelessly inadequate. The fact that the thirty-six M.P.s who signed these proposals have intimated their acceptance of the terms of the Atlantic Charter is surely evidence of the futile ambiguity of that document. The Government, because of its very nature as a coalition of politically opposed groups is almost bound to confine its post-war plans to ambiguous generalities which are subject to widely divergent interpretations. But there need be no such equivocation about a declaration by the common people of this country to the common people of a war-torn Europe. Indeed, the present situation calls for more than another paper policy statement. A gesture is urgently required from the Labour and Socialist forces in this country which will counter the evil effects of the statements of the Right and be really appropriate to the serious, though hopeful, situation which now confronts us. Hitler's power is bound to be waning as disillusionment spreads throughout Europe. Is this not the time when we should be holding a great International Socialist Congress at which representatives of the Socialist groups of Scandinavia, France, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Britain, America and other countries could be present? This gathering would not only be a great demonstration, but it would have the task of working out plans for the reorganisation of Europe on a Socialist basis. The representatives of progressive Indian and Colonial groups could also be present to discuss the broader questions of world planning after the war. Such a Congress would stimulate once more that sense of international fraternity amongst the common people of the world who have a united interest in ensuring the defeat of Hitlerism and avoiding the return to Imperialist power politics which can bring neither peace nor urity. The Labour Movement in this country take the initiative in organising such a conference. they fail, I wonder if any other Socialists, such as signatories to the recent Cove "Peace by cialism" Manifesto would be interested in this posal? The I.L.P. at their recent jubilee conence indicated their readiness to back such a ture. Now that the Communist International been liquidated the initiative rests with the Western Socialists." British Labour should act w.

TOM TAYLOR

## PLAIN SPEAKING

SIR,—This description seems rather inapposite, less plain speaking means finding a very complicated y round the Atlantic Charter and its real sense. The Soviet Union signed the United Nations Pact January, 1942" writes Labour Candidate, and from s he concludes that the territorial annexations preusly carried out by the U.S.S.R. were not comprised the solemn declaration of the signatories to this arter, that "their countries seek no aggrandisement, ritorial or otherwise . . . desire to see no territoial changes that do not accord with the freely exessed wishes of the peoples concerned." It is both pressing and significant that the very people who ss as representatives, or candidates to represent, t-wing opinion should devote their efforts to the ding of ways to get round a declaration which aims replacing might by right. This is a matter of princi-e, and not limited to the question of Poland's eastern ntiers. If Labour Candidate were really to indulge plain speaking, he would have to say outright that is prepared to jettison the Atlantic Charter and to ndone the annexation by Russia of Finland, Estonia, tvia, Lithuania, the eastern half of Poland, Bukoa and Bessarabia, and the extension of her influce to Jugoslavia and Greece. For these were the ims put forward by the U.S.S.R. in the period prior her signing the Atlantic Charter, claims deriving m the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of September th, 1939. Thus, Labour Candidate is proposing t Russia's territory in Europe should be extended the Adriatic and the Baltic. It is obvious that tegic modifications of the frontiers between these o key-points to north and south would soon follow, the very nature of things; all south-eastern Europe uld thus fall within the orbit of the U.S.S.R., a quel to which Labour Candidate might have been pected to object on democratic principles.

Since the writer's aim is not to discard the Atlantic arter but rather to interpret it, he should apply its inciples to the question of Ukrainian and White thenian independence. The Ukrainian nation mbers 40 million, of whom not quite 5,000,000 were under Polish rule. There was a very strong Ukrainian nationalist movement in Poland, its declared aim being independence for the Ukraine. The Ukrainian nationalist movement in Russia was, however, put down by force, and many millions of Ukrainians found themselves in the wastes of Northern Siberia. Labour Candidate should correct his notion that "during the short period of Soviet rule the number of White Russian and Ukrainian schools, newspapers, hospitals, creches, etc., increased rapidly," and should rather inquire how many of these Ukrainians and White Ruthenians found themselves in Siberia during this period. It is strange that Labour Candidate, in quoting the Atlantic Charter on the "freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned," should not rather have suggested consulting the freely expressed wishes of all the peoples actually concerned in this matter.

34 Hill Rise,
N.W.11.

STEFANIA ZAHORSKA

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SIR,—I was interested to read that at some future date you will write an article redefining your position to the U.S.S.R. I wonder if you would in some future articles bear in mind a point that is puzzling me.

To give an example: when Russia attacked Finland you regarded her attitude as reasonable, if not ethically correct, because Finland might be used as a springboard to attack Russia. Surely the fear least Ireland might be used as a springboard to attack England has been one of the reasons for the domination of Ireland by England. And yet, if in the hour of England's dire need, she had demanded and enforced the use of ports in Southern Ireland as bases you would have, quite rightly in my opinion, used the columns of your paper to dissuade this country from such a course.

Do not the small and vulnerable countries (like England) require protection and guarantees against the larger, rather than the other way round? I have seen an argument against the Czecho-Polish Pact that it offended Russia. How are Poland and Czecho-Slovakia then to be guaranteed? That there is some danger of the smaller countries being engulfed by the larger is shown by the action of Germany against Europe and Russia against the Baltic Provinces.

MAUDE PEASE

185A Widmore Road,
Bromley, Kent.

## CAPITALISM AND UNEMPLOYMENT

SIR,—All along Socialists have been affirming, and the *Times* on January 23rd agreed, that "unemployment is not a mere accidental blemish on a private enterprise economy. On the contrary, it is part of the essential mechanism of the system, and has a definite function to fulfil." Its main functions are "that it maintains the authority of master over man," and that, in preventing the vicious spiral of wages and prices, it preserves the value of money.

Schemes for post-war economic and industrial reform may be divided into two classes. (1) Those which acknowledge that such a conception of unemployment must be taken seriously; (2) those which ignore it. Mr. Robert Boothby's contribution seems to belong to the second class. In order to employ people, he says, the rate of capital investment is the decisive factor. Is it? If it is, what alternative does he suggest to the mechanism of unemployment as outlined above?

R. D. BEST

5, Westbourne Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham, 15.

## WAITING FOR BEVERIDGE

SIR,—I cannot quite agree with the statement that there is little to choose between the great hospitals as regards the degree of skill available to those attending their respective out-patients departments. Some time before the outbreak of war I developed a chronic condition involving painful ulcers of the tongue, mouth and throat. Following a common procedure of patients on the panel of a practitioner in middle-class suburbia, I found myself sitting on a form in a whitewashed annexe reserved exclusively for sufferers of that social strata. It would perhaps be untrue to say that during two months or so of somewhat perfunctory attention I did not envy the private patients their priority, comfortable armchairs, and carpets.

Anyway, finding myself without improvement at the end of that time, I resolved to attend one of the great London hospitals. Accordingly a rainy winter morning saw me waiting patiently with a considerable number of others for the privilege of having our ailments diagnosed. Some time later a score or so of embryo medicos in the charge of an older, perhaps qualified doc., came trooping along from patient to patient charged with the task of interrogation and investigation. After inspecting the writer in the aggregate and as separate individuals, the spokesman asked in a stentorian voice: "Have you ever had syphilis?"

Immediately I became the cynosure of all eyes: not that I minded, though it is possible that in respect to this particular question we differ considerably in our degree of sensitivity. When I assured the examiner that I had never had a venereal disease in my life it was plain to see by the look of incredulity on the faces of the audience that I was disbelieved; in fact, more than one of the disciples of Æsculapuis positively guffawed. However, after a while my interrogation

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2nd PRINTING IN PREPARATION

JONATHAN CAPE

ended and, being handed a paper inscribed "Will Professor Blank please do a Wasserman," I was directed to another department. Knowing the implication and waste of time involved, I thanked my mentor. Leaving the hospital's massive portico, I promptly tore the *billet-doux* to shreds and deposited them in a convenient gutter nearby. Not being one of the individuals easily put out of their stride, on the same afternoon I attended a London ear and throat hospital. Following an initial wait of half an hour or so, inspection by a man who evidently "knew his stuff" was just a matter of a few seconds. The diagnosis, chronic laryngitis, being given, I was supplied with medicine, ointment, and gargle, and in a matter of ten days or so completely recovered. Personally I am of opinion that, provided one is available, one should endeavour to attend a specialist hospital rather than a general hospital with a visiting specialist.

MAC

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SIR,—Your correspondent "Saratar" has evidently come across a bad patch in his exploits in the baking trade. Whilst having every sympathy with him I would like to point out to him that membership of our organisation would have been of real benefit to him throughout his unfortunate experience and in the ultimate settlement that no doubt will be necessary.

As a Trade Union we anticipate some of the ideals propounded in Sir William Beveridge's Report. Legal Aid and Sickness payments for members, besides the points referred to by him in his statement relative to the Baking Trade Board.

J. J. THOMASSON
*General Secretary*

Amalgamated Union of
Operative Bakers, Confectioners,
and Allied Workers.

## WHAT CAN IT POSSIBLY MEAN?

SIR,—Mr. Stonier in his review of *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*, by Alan Hodge and myself, does not make it clear that the book purports to provide writers with certain simple principles for testing the intelligibility of their work before publication.

Thus, if Mr. Stonier had been conscious of the reader over his shoulder he could not have published so obscure a sentence as: "Mr. Graves in fact has tried his hand at rewriting Dickens with disastrous results—*The Real David Copperfield*, 1933."

To whom were the results *disastrous?* Certainly not to myself—the book paid expenses and did not lose me my reading public; not to my publisher—I sold him a best-seller under the same contract; not to Dickens, whose popularity remained unaffected; not to the book trade; not to the general reading public; not to the reviewers—who had a grand time proving their loyalty to Dickens. Is Mr. Stonier referring to some private disaster of his own in 1933, consequent on the publication of my *Real David Copperfield?*

ROBERT GRAVES

## SHAKESPEARE AND CHRISTIANITY

SIR,—If I am not too late, I should like to question Mr. Raymond Mortimer in his review of Dr. Tillyard's book when he says that Shakespeare's attitude to life had little or nothing in common with the Christian philosophy. *King Lear* is surely a striking example to the contrary. The "sin" of Lear is the pride of power; the sin of Goneril, Regan and Edmund is that of a will-to-power which overrides the restraints and jangles the harmonies of nature. This evil created by the misuse of the will passes through the world as a destroying flame but is self-destructive, and the redemption of Lear closes the dislocation and completes the Christian philosophy. The whole drama exactly illustrates Niebuhr's definition (*The Nature and Destiny of Man*) of that philosophy:—

> "The law of man's nature . . . is a harmonious relation of life to life in obedience to the divine centre and source of his life. This law is violated when man seeks to make himself the centre and source of his own life. His sin is therefore spiritual and not carnal, though the infection of rebellion spreads from the spirit to the body and disturbs its harmonies also."

Augustine said, "What could begin this evil will but pride, that is the beginning of all sin." Iago is a living commentary upon this. His evil will to destruction has completely overcome the moral law:—"Virtue! A fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus." As Bradley has pointed out, it is not so much envy as pride that has bedevilled him, a devouring monomania of self-esteem. He himself confesses to his will-to-power. The Christian doctrine of free will, again, is perfectly illustrated in *Macbeth*. The ambition of Napoleon in *The Dynasts* is exorably decreed; the ambition of Macbeth is a passion of evil will within himself, struggling into a monstrous growth against the impulses of loyalty and imagination. The evil influence from the Witches reaches both Macbeth and Banquo; the one succumbs to it but the other keeps "my bosom franchised and my allegiance clear."

I submit that all these instances (and I could give others) are an interpretation in terms of the secular drama of the conclusions reached by Christian philosophers upon the nature of evil and the free self-determination of the human spirit.

H. J. MASSINGHAM

## FRENCH PICTURES IN LONDON

SIR,—Mr. Clive Bell, in his article on "French Pictures in London," seems to have misunderstood the position concerning the pictures left by Roger Fry to the Courtauld Institute of Art, as he speaks of the as "hidden away" and "in indecent obscurity."

In peacetime they, with the house and the oth pictures in the hands of the Trustees, may be seen any member of the public on Saturdays. During t war, since our students are much reduced in numbe visitors have been admitted on any day of the we to see the house and such pictures as have not be sent away to safety.

It is possible, however, that had Mr. Clive B called, he might not have seen the Rouault "Moth and Child," since like other pictures in our charg it has frequently been on loan to exhibitions in Londo or the Provinces, organised either by individu galleries, or by such bodies as the British Institute Adult Education, or the Artists' International Associ tion. It had, in fact, previous to the present loan, be only recently returned to us after inclusion in a trave ling exhibition which extended for more than tw years.

T. S. R. BOASE,
Director

University of London
Courtauld Institute of Art.

[Mr. Bell writes: "When Roger Fry left his pi tures to the Courtauld Institute he certainly believe that they would be made visible and accessible to th public. In fact they were huddled into a dark att at the top of the house to which visitors, bent o seeing them, could obtain admittance on Saturday only. If the director and the trustees are sensitive criticism, they will be wise to move the pictures some place where, even in time of peace, they can b seen, and seen on at least six days in the week."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

## JOHN BURNS MEMORIAL

SIR,—John Burns was known as "Honest John, and his rise to Cabinet rank was, I think, unprecedente in the annals of our country, he being the first artis to attain that high rank. His efforts were alway directed to benefit humanity and his honesty of pu pose and deep convictions, together with his honou able character, made a great impression upon all wi whom he came into contact. He was, too, a mo devoted citizen of London and had an extraordinar knowledge of the history of the great Metropoli In order to perpetuate his memory, it is proposed erect a memorial in the Battersea Town Hall, and a lovers of freedom and liberty will, I am sure, b desirous of associating themselves with this proposa I therefore appeal for donations, however small, be sent to me at the Battersea Town Hall, Lavende Hill, S.W.11.

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Mayor and Chairman
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# BOOKS IN GENERAL

OR the purposes of satire the device of assumng the personality of some naive traveller who mes to Europe from a totally alien and mysteris civilisation, is one that has seen better days. ot only is it nowadays well worn but also there a lack of alien and unknown civilisations. Writers e obliged to import ancient Greeks or men om the moon, where Goldsmith could make ee with his imaginary Chinaman and Montesuieu could invent a masochistic Persian who andons his harem for foreign travel. But one f the reasons for the success of the device in the st was, I think, that it had its roots in reality. hinamen, Persians, Europeans *were* astonished y each other in the great centuries of discovery. t was a time of new worlds and new faces and he *Lettres Persanes* are a kind of return journey om Lilliput, from Swift's wicked vision of loomsbury in the Indies and from Crusoe's rry-built, two-man colony in the southern as. The actual tang of travel is on all these tires, the sense of a new, effervescing curiosity bout man and society. Indeed, curiosity itself a new discovery and we seem to have the sight f men enjoying the use of a new faculty for the rst time. The modern satirist who uses the evice has not this advantage; and he is still orse off because his object is reform alone. When one compares the fantasies of Wells, for ample, with those of the 18th century satirists, ne sees how professional and inhumane science as become, how lacking in anything but a purely arty philosophy, and with little but a political rogramme to suggest. Men like Swift or ontesquieu, politically minded though they ere, were fundamentally more genial. Yes, ven Swift. The common sense of Swift and he light percipience of Montesquieu are directed y a fascination with human nature. Swift, who ated human nature in general, created in Gulliver imself one of the most solid human beings in he literature of satire; and Montesquieu's ersian had been well-documented on the subject f human nature by his harem, before he went eeking knowledge in Europe. Has literature een primarily interested in human nature for s own sake since the 18th century? I think ot. It is a long time since the proper study of ankind has been man. We may grant that the 8th century's picture of human nature was a arrow one; that too often it was drawn from the xperience of a narrow society, from the salons f Paris and London; that it was an urban icture with too much stress on the typical court ubjects of vanity and self-interest; but how far ess intimate and humane is the humanitarianism hich became the ruling goddess of the century hat followed. How far less inclined to make us ike human beings. She is a step-mother by omparison.

No one who reads the *Lettres Persanes* to-day an fail to be struck by the fact that the cutting dge of Montesquieu is not in any special chapter f his satire, but in the grace and equilibrium of he whole. His Persian traveller might well have eported Europe upside down, like a Shavian; ut like a Shavian he would then have left us with sense of futility. Instead, we hear as much of he confusion of the harem as we do of the follies f Europe. From the harem comes the defence f virtue and authority as well as the romantic ry for nature and the heart. The parts of the arrative balance with a delicacy which disturbs he mind by pleasing it. Montesquieu is most angerous when he is most gay; most packed ith criticism when he is most amusing. The itter Maxims of La Rochefoucauld call out an mmediate and bitter resistance from the reader; ut Montesquieu begins by disarming and slides ast all defences. He is a delayed-action aphorst: "Les Français ne parlent presque jamais de eurs femmes; c'est qu'ils ont peur d'en parler evant des gens qui les connaissent mieux qu'eux." To-day a plea for the pre-eminence of a natural istory of human nature might be considered comlacent or reactionary—who would now say with Montesquieu that the really virtuous man was the "bon père de famille"? But there is no doubt that in his time this was a revolutionary and dangerous doctrine, after the violent propaganda of the religious wars.

I did not intend to write about Montesquieu at all, but was reminded of him by another pseudo-Persian traveller of the 19th century, a lighter weight fellow altogether: the modest Hajji Baba of Ispahan. He was the creation of James Morier who had been a diplomat in Persia and after the success of the first Hajji Baba book, Morier wrote an English sequel.[*] The busy, fervent, enthusiastic and chronically anxious yes-man of the Shah's ambassador, comes to England and discovers the English. Hajji Baba is not really a satirical device. Already the 19th century is too pleased with itself to think of introducing the innocent foreign critic. The Mirza must be reckoned in the enormous catalogue of exotic importations—like Indian vases and Moorish bric-à-brac—which were brought here to swell our ever-growing good opinion of ourselves, and he does this by making a fool of himself. For example, Hajji Baba collects—after great expenses—a wonderfully deformed guardian for the British king's harem; he proposes to cut up hotel sheets for shirts and the curtains for sashes, he makes long political speeches to city companies which are abruptly reduced to six words by the interpreter and, in general, misunderstands everything with unflagging zest. This book reads like the beginning of that love of horseplay and burlesque which our middle classes applied with thumping vulgarity to everything foreign, in the 19th century, and which culminated, I suppose, in the American *Innocents Abroad.*

But Morier was writing in 1824 before that movement had got going. He was a scholar. He knew a great deal about Persia and, like Kinglake who wrote 20 years later, he had acquired a taste for the supple wickedness of the East and especially for the Oriental habit of combining magnificence with the calculations of the bazaar. He liked the comedy of corruption. He knew Persian society and when the wonderful Mirza Abul Hassan Khan came to England as the Shah's ambassador in 1809 and again in 1819, Morier was deputed to teach him English and to be his guide. So that *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* is based on some of the farcical occurrences of that famous embassy. The Ambassador was a handsome and captivating figure but, like Mirza Firouz in Morier's book, he could never get over the fact that European ladies were unveiled. He caused serious trouble in hotels by kissing ladies right and left and had to be reprimanded. But his chief difficulty was the question of precedence. On this he was a stickler. He would be first or nowhere at all. This is a repeated comedy in *Hajji Baba.* The remarkable quality of Morier was a suavity of manner which entirely saves him from the caricature which usually makes a book of this kind merely vulgar. Mirza Firouz is a complete character—a simple, explosive, grandiloquent, punctiliously quarrelsome Persian, dashing and delightfully ingenuous. His wretched entourage huddle glumly on one sofa in the huge English rooms whiling away the time by pulling the bell ropes to see if the servants will come, while their master—who has suddenly decided "to go English"—disappears and enjoys himself. Hajji Baba; the yes-man, has to deal with all the difficulties; he stands between the despot and the deplorably casual English, miserably trying to reconcile two impossible worlds. There is a special beauty in his situation: his uncle and protector is the Ambassador's superior and enemy at the court of Ispahan. The Ambassador may therefore fly into a rage but is always obliged to back out apologetically before his temper is over. It is the charm of Hajji Baba's character that he can gently but satisfactorily exploit this position. He tries to copy his master's Anglophilia by pursuing the daughters of a Mrs. Hogg, an East Indian merchant's wife, and he in fact sets out as a fortune hunter. But Hajji Baba's fascinating plots on the excruciating daughters of this lady misfire. Neither they nor Mrs. Hogg have any notion that his peculiar antics are amorous and, while he plots away, the daughters are married off under his nose; and his misfortunes are capped by the death of his uncle. For thereby the Ambassador at last gets the whip hand of his underling. The comedy of this book is based on the gaping disparity between the infinite calculations of the Persians—especially their passion for "negotiations"—and the negligence of the English. The Persians make formal speeches, full of the flowers of language, and the English Prime Minister simply says "Oh" in reply. There is an amusing scene when the Persians go on a State visit to the East India's Company's office. They take a portrait of the Shah as a gift to the directors of the company.

> The portrait of the Shah was then brought in and exhibited. As soon as it was extended in full length, the Ambassador thought it necessary to approach it and make a prostration, as if his Majesty in person were present, and this example we immediately followed. But not a chair sitter (the Directors) moved a muscle; they looked on at the ceremony we had performed in apparent astonishment.

They had not yet recovered from an earlier present—a book of poems.

Morier's English sequel has not the liveliness of the Persian adventures of Hajji Baba. There is a disappointing smugness in his impressions of England. The idea of a band of Persians setting out armed to the teeth and ready to defend themselves against brigands and assassins between Bath and London is not a joke that can last long. It was probably unfortunate that Morier knew exactly what Persians did think when they came to this country. Still the portrait of an ever-hopeful but ever disappointed official who buries his bribes and lives like a cat on hot bricks, is good comedy. Morier, being a diplomat, likes scoring off the vulgar businessman of the period and his climbing wife; and the Hogg family are like a crude sketch for Thackeray's picture of George Osborne's family. By 1824 the new rich of the Napoleonic wars were on the move.

V. S. PRITCHETT

## NARVIK

**The Mountains Wait.** By THEODOR BROCH. *Michael Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

**Hitler Attacks Norway.** By HERMAN K. LEHMKUHL. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 2s.

**Combined Operations, 1940-2.** *H. M. Stationery Office.* 1s.

Most personal accounts of the war are either too breathlessly close to events or, if the author waits, too remote and trivial. Danger isn't easy to write about; the atmosphere that encourages egotism—how *he* got away from France, how *she* stood up to the bombing—is also blasting to its fruits in print. The exceptional book comes probably from someone who can keep cool on paper, as the soldier does under fire. He has a story to tell, and no attitude is involved. Such a writer, produced by his experience of war, is Theodor Broch. As mayor of Narvik, in a Norway that had escaped occupation, he might, after a happy and middling life, have sat down to write his autobiography; it might have been charming, for he has natural qualities as a writer; but the Nazis invaded, the quiet life was blown sky-high. Broch held on and then escaped to America, where, taking his time, he has written an excellent book. *The Mountains Wait* describes vividly and coolly the events of 1940, from the appearance of a huge Nazi whaler off-shore to the withdrawal of British and French troops two months later, but these events form part of a larger picture of life in a small Norwegian town. Narvik, with its 10,000 inhabitants, had a bay in front and pine hills behind. Fishing fleets. A Swedish iron company. Three newspapers. Merchants who went bankrupt in a depression and started again. One rich banker. Labour politics. The express steamer left on Friday nights for the south. Street 1, with most of the buildings belonging to the banker, was the city's centre.

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[*] *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England.* By James Morier. Live Books Resurrected. Edited by Stanley Jast. Werner Laurie. 7s. 6d.

> On calm and clear evenings there were always people walking up and down Street 1, people with children, walking sticks, and dignity, or only with dignity. The walking tempo was slow and sedate; no one was rushed for time, no one was going anywhere in particular, and the street lasted longer at a slower pace. And one always greeted with the hat. God, how one greeted with the hat! Not only to ladies or elderly gentlemen, but to everyone. All the men agreed that this hat-raising procedure was a silly custom that should be abolished, yet no one had the courage to flout tradition.

Theodor Broch arrived there from Oslo, a young lawyer without connections, married, in 1930. During the ten years before invasion he built up a business and at the age of thirty-six was elected Mayor. April 9, 1940, was the day of the German attack: a Tuesday; Monday had been as usual except for the presence of the whaler flying a swastika. At 4.45 a.m. there was a huge explosion. War? The Brochs' little girl asked, "Is it Christmas?" A few hours later, in fog, the town had been occupied and Broch as Mayor was listening to the polite explanations of a Nazi general. Sad there had been loss of life and so on. Broch seems to have asserted quietly his integrity on this occasion and during the dangerous and fluctuating times that followed. When hostages were required his was the first name on the list. Narvik was occupied, then relieved by British and Norwegian forces, bombed and recaptured by the Germans, and Broch made his way across the Swedish frontier. He tells the story with a beautiful ease and restraint. Not much missed his eye, from the insinuating refugee who turned out to be a spy, to the local quisling—commander of the garrison at Narvik! There had been no opposition on land.

Some light, from a wider angle, is thrown on the method of invasion in *Hitler Attacks Norway*. One of the Norwegian warships, the *Eidsvold*, was sunk by a trick. "A German officer came on board the *Eidsvold* and asked the Commander to surrender his ship. This was refused. The Commander was heard running forward calling out: 'Now we are going to fight, boys.' But they had no chance . . . as soon as the Germans had left the Norwegian ship they were signalling with a lamp from the boat—and a moment later *Eidsvold* was literally blown to pieces by a direct hit in the ammunition store by a torpedo . . ." Similar ingenuities had taken place elsewhere, and bands and processions appeared in the streets before citizens had time to realise what was happening. *Hitler Attacks Norway* is a straightforward narrative of facts, issued by the information office of the Norwegian Government. Some resentment, one gathers, is still felt over the small number of ships sent by Britain to Oslo Fjord at the critical moment, and over the previous laying of mines off the Norwegian coast. There is a hint that the British Government knew more about the coming invasion than it revealed.

*Combined Operations*, 1940-2, maintains the very high standard of earlier M.O.I. publications such as *Bomber Command* and *Front Line*, 1940–42. Before coming to actual raids we learn something of the Combined Operations Command and of Commando training. The dropping of airborne troops becomes a routine in which, apparently, physical sensation plays little part.

> On falling through the hole your legs are immediately blown sidewards by the slip stream and you find yourself parallel to the ground. A moment later there is a nibbling feeling at your shoulders; the canopy has opened, but the jerk is no harder than that made by a fair-sized trout when you hook it. After that, all sensation of falling ends. When near the ground, it is the earth moving up to meet you and not you meeting the earth, which you notice.

The actual landing, though, is compared to jumping off a slow-moving train.

Small raids began in June, 1940, with a reconnaissance landing on the French coast near Boulogne. The bigger operations that followed are described in some detail. Lofoten Islands, Spitzbergen, the attempt at Beda Littoria to capture Rommel, Vaagso, St. Nazaire, Diego Suarez, Dieppe. Twenty-five pages are given to the Dieppe raid, and there are glimpses from all angles—land, sea and air—of this costly invasion trial. But Dieppe, says the writer, was the beginning of Germany's taking the defensive; it was followed, three months later, by the magnificent and faultless landings in North Africa.

G. W. STONIER

## THE PARSON'S WIFE

**The History of the Parson's Wife.** By MARGARET WATT. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

The title of this book calls up the world of a Caldecott illustration: a church, a farmyard, a modest female figure with a basket over her arm in a village street. These are such pleasant associations that it is at first difficult to account for the traditional unpopularity of the parson's wife. The charm lies partly in nomenclature; call her husband a clergyman and the urban and professional aspects, the flint-encrusted church and the tea-cosy at the bazaar, reassert themselves.
But wives in general are universally unpopul
and the parson's wife can be gay or drab, serio
or superficial, interfering or aloof without escapi
blame, either for fulfilling or cheating expec
tions. Perhaps fiction has treated her a lit
unkindly. Christina Pontifex, in *The Way of*
*Flesh*, is loathsome, but for all her foundation
fact, she never leaves the pages of the boo
Mrs. Proudie and Mrs. Norris, on the oth
hand, are two of the most memorable and rep
lent women in literature. Mrs. Proudie is perha
preferable. She has something of the grotesq
grandeur of a rhinoceros, although, deprived
her diocesan power and her riches, she mig
conceivably have dwindled into the venomo
parasitism of Mrs. Norris. It is hard to find
counterweight to these two redoubtable characte
Mrs. Elton and Mrs. Collins do not redress t
balance, poor Milly Barten seems an effaced b
relief beside their sculptural reality, the oth
Trollope candidates appear nondescript and pa
Three of Jane Austen's heroines marry prospecti
clergymen, but it is only in the case of the irrit
ing Fanny Price that a breath of future cleric
atmosphere ruffles the pages. The eighteen
century rarely considered the Church as a pr
fession eligible for heroes, in spite of Dr. Primro
and parsons' wives, if they exist, are usual
simple women whose function is merely to e
barrass their husbands by their fertility.

The parson's wife began her historical existen
under a cloud inherited from the "pries
woman," and it is surprising, as Miss Watt poi
out, that the impact on society of the Post-R
formation marriages of priests should have l
so few traces. Henry VIII, with his custom
orthodoxy where his own interests were not co
cerned, disapproved of his clergy breaking th
vows of celibacy. He apparently also feared t
"they would breed too quickly." But in spite
penalties prescribed in the Act of Six Articles
was unable to avert this danger, and Cranm
his own Archbishop of Canterbury, was marri
although Mrs. Cranmer lived in such seclusi
that she is reported to have travelled in a tru
with holes bored in the lid. Many must have fo
lowed his example during the reign of Edward V
for about a quarter of the clergy lost their livin
on grounds of marriage when Mary came to t
throne. Elizabeth also preferred celibate clerg
but although as a Virgin Queen she was in
stronger moral position than her Bluebeard fath
she too was hampered by a married Archbish
whom she valued. Under James I the right of t
clergy to marry and the legitimacy of their chil
ren were at last recognised, and the law of t

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d confirmed the previous ecclesiastical ruling. he ejections and upheavals that followed, how-er catastrophic for the individual parson's wife, ft her status unquestioned.

From this moment her development is bound with that of her husband. At the beginning the eighteenth century he was poor and depend-t; Queen Anne's Bounty and the rise in the lue of land increased his income and raised his cial position. With the era of the "younger n" began the heyday of the parson's wife from social and material point of view, and as the neteenth century went on interest in social con-tions provided her with a new field of action. he pendulum is now swinging back with a mp in religious prestige, relative poverty, and sence of servants, the foundation stone of the yllic Victorian vicarage.

Miss Watt has written a most enjoyable book this interesting subject. She has conveyed the storical perspective with great conciseness with-t losing the flavour of the individual characters scribed. The book is agreeably, at times pene-tingly, written, and the many quotations from tters and memoirs are admirably chosen and oothly dovetailed into the narrative. The mmon characteristic of all these women, what-er their century, seems to have been their ormous families. "'How many children has r. Annesley?' said a friend . . . 'I believe is two dozen or a quarter of a hundred,' was the rtling reply." But in spite of the remorseless ntinuity of births, the extent of their other tivities is impressive and humiliating. Mrs. atty, the mother of Mrs. Ewing, had eight child-n, wrote books and poems, edited a magazine, udied German literature and practised etching, lligraphy and illumination. She also published "serious scientific work on seaweeds"! And the chapter on the minister's wife, Mrs. Grant, other authoress, describes a day's work which even more staggering. In fact, the wives of rsons and ministers come out very well. There ve been few scandals and some saints among em; above all they have produced a very high oportion of remarkable children, a fact in their vour which should not be forgotten, and many ere clearly gifted and charming women them-lves. The majority seem to have been happy d contented, however hard-worked, but the ost haunting figure in the book is that of Kathar-e Brown, the wife of a minister and writer of ligious books called Thomas Boston. He married r in 1700, having convinced himself after many alms of conscience that he "discerned the arkles of grace in her." After a life of sorrows, ill-health and the death of many children she was overcome by a form of melancholia and even her faith seems to have wavered, leaving her "struggling to hold fast to Christ like a bird on the side of a wall, gripping with its claws."

CRESSIDA RIDLEY

## A GRAMMAR OF PEACE-MAKING

**The Armistices of 1918.** By SIR FREDERICK MAURICE. *Oxford University Press.* 7s. 6d.

History, when properly told and taught, is of great value to the present, though generally human beings are slow and ungrateful pupils. The last phase of the first world-war which Sir Frederick Maurice retells in his extremely lucid and condensed book, *The Armistices of* 1918, may, if our future peace-makers will care to read it, provide us with a pattern of precedents which in 1918 were hardly available.

The military breakdown of the German Army came almost a year sooner than the Imperial War Council assembled in London on July 31st, 1918, had expected. Consequently the plans for armistices and peace treaties were hardly prepared. It seems of paramount importance to bear this fact in mind for the present phase of the second world war. How far have we prepared plans for a Nazi defeat in 1943 or 1944? Another important lesson to which Sir Frederick Maurice draws our attention is that at the time the Allies began to set in motion a machinery for relief work and the reconstruction of devastated areas, the co-ordination with effective distribution and the provision of shipping was not sufficiently thought out. The same applies to the military conditions of the armistices, particularly with regard to Germany.

The lessons of these tragic failures, which to some extent caused the second world war, are obvious. Sir Frederick Maurice proposes the establishment of two Supreme War Councils, "one to deal with the problems of the Pacific and Far East, the other with the rest of the world." Under these two Councils two secretariats should work with a Naval, Military and Air Section, an Economic, Communication, Transport, Health, and Political Section. It would be the task of these secretariats "to make preliminary studies of the problems which will arise so that the complete organisation may get to work promptly."

Again it might be useful to ask how far such secretariats already exist? The present Food Conference in the U.S.A. is certainly concerned with some of the questions with which Sir Frederick Maurice asks us to deal now, but it is doubtful whether a *complete* machinery for preparing the armistices does already exist. Moreover, it seems that the various roving commissions undertaken by Mr. Churchill, though certainly less rigid than the Supreme War Councils of the first world war, do not quite supersede the necessity for a more permanent machinery, particularly in the light of Sir Frederick Maurice's brilliant analysis.

One can only wish that those, including our politicians, who are prepared to learn from historic precedent, should make the content of this valuable study their own.

J. P. MAYER

## EISENSTEIN ON FILMS

**The Film Sense.** BY SERGEI M. EISENSTEIN. Translated and edited by Jay Layda. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

Eisenstein is one of the most brilliant and egotistic of film directors. *Potemkin*, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, *Que Viva Mexico!* and *Alexander Nevsky* are four films that entitle him to talk about art, himself, and the cinema as though they were one and the same thing. The "film sense" of the title is exclusively his and no one else's. He makes no bones about it; wherever he turns, on a street corner or in literature or painting, it is to find nourishment for that sense. The note-books of Leonardo provide him with a shooting-script ready-made (should it be wanted) of the Deluge; he reshuffles passages of Milton or Pushkin to suit the camera; Rimbaud's sonnet of the vowels starts a hopeless chase after the relation between colour and emotion; and in a dramatic fugue of Verdi he finds confirmation for new screen methods. These investigations into the arts are fascinating but often rather difficult for the reader to pursue. So far as Eisenstein's own technique and his sense of it are concerned, every detail discovered is valuable; but he is not content to be an artist aware of his method. He tries to argue out a system of aesthetics, theorising, shapelessly digressing, vaporising, clutching at analogies and the emphasis of italics. The result is a brilliant, muddled and self-conscious book, with a hard core of experience loosely wrapped in the author's attempt at definitions. The change of style from professorial abstraction to film-script is remarkable; the second is as vivid and actual as the first is nebulous.

But though *The Film Sense* is a difficult and exasperating book to read, it contains some of the best technical criticism of film-making that has been written. A number of passages are printed

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from the scripts of *Strike, An American Tragedy, Sutter's Gold, Que Viva Mexico!* and *Ferghana Canal;* and—to come to a film which most English readers will have seen—*Alexander Nevsky* is analysed and illustrated at length. The perfect alliance, in that somewhat rebarbative film, of picture and sound with Prokofiev's score was achieved only by a remarkably close collaboration of musician and director. Sometimes the picture suggested the music: a striking example is the bass tuba notes which reinforced amazingly the close-ups of soldiers blowing horns. In other cases music came first and film followed; or the music was adapted, one phrase being repeated twelve times instead of the original four, to heighten the dramatic tension. Eisenstein's description of such technical points is admirable. Film directors and script-writers will, I hope, study this part of the book with reverence. The general reader who is also a film-fan will find the book hard going but invaluable for the light it throws on one method of film-making.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

## THE SCIENCE OF THE COMPOST HEAP

**Cleanliness and Godliness.** By REGINALD REYNOLDS. *Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

The modern valve water-closet was invented towards the end of the fifteenth century by Sir John Harington, who, in 1596, wrote a book telling the world about his invention. This book he called *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, and in it surveyed sanitary conditions, contemporary and ancient. Mr. Reynolds, interested by this literary curiosity, decided to supplement Harington's historical survey. He accumulated a mass of material concerning prehistoric privies, the sanitary and insanitary practices of many races in disposing of their excreta, and the *tabus* and conventions which have grown up with these different habits. Much of this material is odd, interesting and instructive. Thus, we read that in the year 1579 there were but three privies in Tower Street in the City of London to meet the needs of about sixty houses and eighty-five people. But even this, Mr. Reynolds tells us, was an improvement upon the state of certain rents in the Basinghall Ward in the previous century; for these were altogether without privies, the householders "being constrained to throw all their filth into the street." Mr. Reynolds is a literary craftsman, and he presents this mass of unconventional information with studied humour—not, however, as Mr. John Cowper Powys would have us think, of authentic "Rabelaisian" type. In fact, if comparison is to be made, it should rather be with Sterne at his most conscious.

The final sections of the book deal with the latest findings of science as to the evil consequences of methods of "waste"-disposal currently practised in England to-day, and it is in these chapters that Mr. Reynolds's style is least apt, making it hard for the inquiring but unsophisticated reader to get at the facts. Having weeded out the humour, we are reminded in these later pages of the sensible practices of those seasoned old agriculturalists the Chinese, who return to the soil all that garbage and human excretion which "the ultra-civilised Western" burns or empties into the sea.

So long ago as 1829, William Cobbett, in the first edition of *The English Gardener*, speaks of the importance, especially for cottagers, of the compost heap consisting of "the shovellings of grass and turf from the sides of the roads, of weeds or roots of weeds raked off from a field," and many other things such as "ashes of wood, rags, and the contents of old hot-beds." Seven years earlier, in his *Cottage Economy*, he advised the gardener to begin to make his heap of the cleansings of every place about his dwelling and of the sweepings of the road outside. "Every act that tends to neatness round a dwelling," he wrote, "tends to the creating of a mass of manure; and I have very seldom seen a cottage with a plot of ground of a quarter of an acre belonging to it, round about which I could not have collected a very large heap of manure." And, although the part played by living micro-organisms in the process was then unknown, he made the significant remark that "a great deal more is done by the fermentation of manures than people generally imagine."

My own interest in this subject of humus, the fertilisation of the soil, and the right use of human and animal excreta, was first aroused in 1891, by an address delivered at Brighton by the President of the section of Preventive Medicine at the Health Congress there being held. The lecturer was Dr. George Vivian Poore, and the title of his lecture was *The Living Earth*. Later, this, with other addresses and essays, was incorporated in a book called *Rural Hygiene*, a book which I still possess and value highly. It is illustrated with representations of gooseberries, raspberries, currants and peas gathered from Dr. Poore's garden, this having been fertilised by human disjecta which too commonly find their way into the sewer. Poore was writing nearly seventy years after Cobbett, and, of course, was familiar with much biological and chemical knowledge not availa in Cobbett's day, but he agrees with his prede sor that the explanation of the fertilising value properly constructed compost heap is due to fermentation of its components; adding that fermentation is caused by saphrophytic mic organisms. Since the days of Poore, our kno ledge of this matter has again moved on, and it been proved that compost heaps of enorm manurial value can easily be built up so long the necessary micro-organisms are provided w the elements—principally nitrogen—(which th formerly obtained from liquid human and ani excreta) needed for their multiplication.

With farmyard manure no longer obtaina other than in the smallest quantities, and bear in mind the prejudices of the ordinary to dweller and suburban allotment-holder, the Go ernment gives the novice explicit instructions the building of compost heaps, the layers which are interspersed with small quantities chemical mixtures containing nitrates with certain amount of potash and superphospha A well-known semi-proprietary blend of th minerals is most commonly employed by amateur, and its use is recommended by Ministry of Agriculture. My own househo wisely adheres to the practice which I establish many years ago, following the example Dr. Poore.

HARRY ROBERTS

**Foundations of Dream - Interpretation.** SAMUEL LOWY. *Kegan Paul.* 16s. 6d.

The larger work from which this is an extr should place Dr. Lowy's name high among theorists of psycho-therapy. He deals modestly scientifically with a subject about which there has b much facile dogmatism, over-simplification, and ch mysticism.

The author was a pupil of Stekel, and originall neurologist. His psychiatric theories cannot, ho ever, be easily classified. He has kept clear of clannishness and polemics of the schools, and rema both eclectic and vigorously independent. hypotheses about the nature of dreaming lap over i physical medicine on the one side and into acade psychology or philosophy on the other.

The maps and melodramas which psychotherapi employ to expound and manipulate the subconsc and unconscious activities of the mind have long b a metaphysician's nightmare. Dr. Lowy's work model includes several new devices and improveme on that of Freud. His concept of "the unthinkabl seems obviously useful, though like many another i in this book it is difficult to accept because it will

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## NORWICH UNION INSURANCE SOCIETIES

**Annual Reports**

The Reports of the Norwich Union Insurance Societies just issued show excellent results despite present difficult conditions. The new business transacted in 1942 by the Life Society was £7,441,856, £758,448 more than in 1941, whilst the total funds are now almost £55,000,000, an increase of £1,700,000.

Total claims for the year were £1,356,536, which includes £213,000 due to war deaths, whilst £2,000,000 was paid out under matured policies.

The total premium income of the Fire Society was £5,089,787, an increase of £630,844. The profit on the Fire account was £204,261 against £90,358 in 1941, and on the Accident account £244,658 against £162,459.

During the past four years the Norwich Union Societies have increased their holdings in British Government securities by £6,400,000, and in Dominion and Indian Government securities by £2,500,000.

Over 800 members of the United Kingdom staffs alone are now on service, but every effort is being made to deal as efficiently as possible with the enquiries for insurance, the need for which is being realised more and more by the people of this country.

## Company Meeting

## IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES

### FACTORIES AT FULL PRESSURE

THE sixteenth ordinary general meeting of Imperial Chemical Industries Limited was held on May 27 in London.

The Rt. Hon. Lord McGowan, K.B.E., D.C.L., LL.D., the chairman, presided.

The following is an extract from the chairman's statement circulated with the report and accounts:—

The intensification of the war during 1942 raised to still higher levels the pressure of demand for the products of our factories. They have worked to full capacity throughout the year. Our plants generally are being run at the highest possible pressures, working many more hours a day in some cases than normal and giving output well beyond usual rated capacities.

Considerable quantities of exports have been safely carried through all perils to their destination. We again pay tribute to the courage of the merchant sailors and the high degree of protection afforded by the British and American forces on the sea and in the air. Our main manufacturing subsidiary or associated companies in the British Empire have continued their successful careers.

We have a substantial interest already in the plastics industry, and some notable achievements to our credit in the production of new and highly complex plastics with a promising future. It is now nearly seven years since we decided as an initial step to commence research on pharmaceutical products with a view to later manufact We had in our dyestuffs enterprise essential basis for entry into this hi specialised field, and in our powerful search establishments in organic chemi the necessary instrument of progress.

During the years immediately prece the war we were pursuing the objec of discovering new substances, but on outbreak of war a fresh situation aros that there were many important drugs w had hitherto been available solely f Germany, and our energies were tu towards mitigating this difficulty. Our e into manufacture has therefore b accelerated until we have now felt it de able to co-ordinate our activities by formation of a separate company, name Imperial Chemical (Pharmaceutic Limited. We have had the satisfaction providing the Government with a nu of essential pharmaceutical products.

We have played our part in scie developments during the war, and are re to adapt our novelties to the many uses will come with victory and peace. We convinced that British industry must be pared to invest much more generously in pre-war days in research and deve ment. For years past we have spent siderable sums, but we are at the pre time considering a marked post-war ex sion of the company's scientific staff, laboratory accommodation, the necessary perimental engineering shops and all o branches of this work.

The total gross income shown in the solidated income statement is £22,18 compared with £19,956,000 for 1941. The consolidated income for the year has r from £6,243,000 to £6,873,000, an increas £630,000. The estimated total Nati Defence Contribution and Excess Profits both British and overseas, chargeable on home and overseas companies exc £7,200,000.

conveniently into any accepted system of ideas out ideas. Dr. Lowy has packed his argument too usely for it to be summarised in a brief review. he has not failed to support every step with case terial which gives the reader grounds for disagreent if he wants them. The book is rather heavy ing.

e Britain I Want. By Emanuel Shinwell, M.P. *Macdonald.* 10s. 6d.

There are no fireworks in this book. Not even a arly realised plan of action. The trained student of airs will find in its pages little that is new. But if e book is valuable for its purpose it would be still ore valuable if it could have been published more aply. It is not designed for the expert, but for e many who are conscious of social evils, bewildered d blurred about remedies and anxious to know hat a well-informed, hard-hitting Socialist leader s to say or offer. Mr. Shinwell is among the ophets; he could well have been more personal d autobiographic. He is a great hand at seeing ough contemporary illusions; if the Labour Party tained a few hundred more as determined and able be there would not be so many who assume that the abour Party's own programme is illusory. Mr. Shinell shows that it need not be.

## Week-end Competitions

### No. 695

et by **Diogenes**

The Spanish press has suddenly and unanimously ecided that bombing is not only barbarous but uses. The usual prizes are offered for an epigram pon this belated conversion.

ULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number f the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and ould be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great urnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor y first post on Monday, June 7th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves e right to print in part or as a whole any matter nt in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. nnot be returned. When no entries reach the quired standard no prize will be awarded.

## ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 692

et by **Fred Oyster**

We offer the usual prizes for the best items—recipes or menus—of political cookery. Limit, 150 words.

**Report by Fred Oyster**

Competitors have been enjoying themselves. Metaphors from the kitchen and the dining-room cling naturally to politics, and the opportunity for punning, party satire, vicarious appetite and sheer fantasy was unrivalled. Most of the entries contained one or two bits that deserved quotation. Their fault was that they tried to bring in everything. Crème I.L.P. has its own flavour:

> Take a milk and water proposition. Squeeze in the juice of many sour grapes and add vinegar till the whole has an acid taste, then proceed to pick holes in it till it is all in shreds . . .
>
> (Douglas Harrison)

I liked also the ingredients of F. Lowe's Post-War Pudding to which must be added "Kay-Martin sauce, beaten with round polished Kay-Wood, to take out the bite," and L. E. J.'s Spanish dish: "When things begin to seethe, reduce to tears, and set aside to cool." Prizes to be divided equally between Victrim (though I miss the point of "yarrow"), the author of "Indian Hash," Elkan Allan and Stanley J. Sharpless. Name and address, please, of Victrim and the author of "Indian Hash."

PRIZES.

Food Facts, Last Series.

How to Make an Omelette without Breaking Eggs.
A Continental Post-War Recipe.

Take a continent, cut up and slice into small pieces. Meanwhile have ready, before the fat is in the fire, a thick White Sauce prepared with the following ingredients:

One very good pope's nose.
A dash of Château Habsburg, 1914 (kept in the best American cellars).
Some thoroughly bad eggs, not too malodorous, if possible, beaten and preserved from the last political scramble.
A bouquet-garni of French General "Herbe Militaire" (yarrow) to be had in Africa at the price of France.

Mix well and stir continuously from the left to the right, on a moderate fire. When sufficiently thick, pour over continent, sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Garnish with small light-red radishes, carefully picked and trimmed (their outer skins should not be scraped off prematurely).

Serve with *force majeure.*

Insufficient for 300 million people. (Victrim)

Indian Hash (or Rod in Pickle).

*Ingredients.*—2 or 3 religions, 500 million £s riches, 1,000 jars Military Pickle, a stiff penal code (previously beaten up—the stiffer the better), remains of feudal system from melting pot, flavour of commercial interest (quantity as desired), 1 viceroy.

Mix, but do not blend, ingredients. Distribute riches unevenly, leaving large portions of poverty and uneducation, and keep all firmly under British Rule for 200 years. Cover with white paper and cook in hot oven until Cripps. When browned off, be careful to shut all doors, as any breath of fresh air might spoil the hash, which will now show a tendency to rise. Quell any rising, whether violent or not, by whipping briskly. Keep at fever heat a few months longer and the hash will then be perfect. Serve with Imperial Sauce. Do not use any reasoning.

Cookery Corner.

Recipe for Common Wealth Spice (also known as Essence of Acland).

Take nine points, preferably well-seasoned, mix with Christian Principles to taste, and boil. Add three big nuts and place into political boiling-pot, stirring continuously. It may be found that three nuts are too many, so withdraw two, leaving only the colonel. (This last does not look unlike Soupçon de Valera, *c.f.*) Increase heat. You will find this spice most acceptable to the jaded wartime appetite. Simmer gently. Surprisingly, it does not go well with Russian Paprika, though they have many ingredients in common; however, it is not so deep a red. The spice should now be ready for serving—hot and strong. Young tastes will like it undiluted, but more mature palates may prefer it watered down somewhat.

(Elkan Allan)

Appeasement Pudding.
(Pièce de résistance à l'aggression.)

A tempting party dish. "Prevents that thinking feeling." Recommended for also weak constitutions suffering from nerves, etc., to help them build up strength.

Take a shrimp (a poor one will do) and remove backbone. Butter thoroughly. Stuff with gammon. Add red herrings, letters, etc., to taste. Mix well and beat about the bush until the mixture reaches a smooth, thick constituency. Some people like to add a few raspberries at this stage. The whole should then be half-baked, left to simmer gentle, and stirred occasionally with an umbrella. A certain amount of scum will rise to the surface; this is inevitable and should be ignored.

Appeasement pudding can be served at any time; properly canned it has been known to last almost indefinitely. You may find it leaves a slightly bitter taste in the mouth unless taken with a pinch of salt. Best garnish is *la sauce anglaise.*

(Stanley J. Sharpless)

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OUNG Artist requires furn. (divan) studio or room. Near London. Box 385.

OUNG woman (tem. civil serv.) wants rm., furn. or unfurn., with cookg. facils: Chelsea, estminster, Kensington. Mod. rent. Box 384.

RITER-Lecturer requires spacious bed-sitting room; (single, male); would bring any books and shelves; whole or partial ard; London. Box 377.

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IVIL servant requires Aug.-Sept. unfurn. flat/house, 3 bedrms., mod. rent, N. or . of London. Box 494.

OUNG business gentleman returning Town after evacuation requires accommodation or near London. Would consider sharing use or flat with another. Meals, except id-day, required. Reasonable terms. Box 363.

**Accommodation—continued**

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OXFORD. Two young men seek accom. long week-end before June. Box 348.

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BIRKBECK College (University of London). Autumn Term begins on Friday, September 10th. Applications for admission from men and women who desire to read at the week-ends for degrees in the Faculties of Arts and Science for B.Sc. (Econ.) Intermediate only, or for the Diploma in Geography should be addressed The Clerk, Birkbeck College, E.C.4.

SECRETARIAL Training Course. The John Lewis Partnership, a disinterested experiment in social and industrial reform, proposes to open shortly at Peter Jones, a secretarial training course. Shorthand and Typewriting taught by qualified teachers and practical experience in modern business methods provided. Good prospects of subsequent employment with the Partnership. School Leaving Certificate standard essential. Some older students also accepted. Please apply for Prospectus to Peter Jones, Sloane Sq., S.W.1.

BOARD of Education. Course for Leaders and Organisers in the Youth Service, at Bristol University, 1st September to 15th September, 1943. The Course will be concerned with general problems; but it is intended to give special attention to rural work and to the development of Young Farmers' Clubs. No fee will be charged for the Course itself, and the inclusive fee, covering maintenance and gratuities, will be £6 6*s.* Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, Board of Education, Belgrave Sq., S.W.1.

LEARN to Speak in Public. Glady Nyren, L.R.A.M. (Elocution), 5 Antrim Mansions, N.W.3. PRI. 1369.